بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

© Umm Al-Qura FOR TRANSLATION, PUBLISHING AND DISTRIBUTION

Second Edition
1423 - 2002

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without written permission from the publishers.

Published by:
Umm al-Qura
For Translation,
Publishing & Distribution
Al-Mansura, Egypt.
Tel.: *050-2235*157

مؤسسة أم القرى
للترجمة والنشر والتوزيع
المنصورة – مصر
ت : ٢٢٣٥١٥٧ – ٠٥٠

CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: Definition of Patience 1

CHAPTER TWO: The Reality of Patience 3

CHAPTER THREE: Connotative Meanings of Patience 10

CHAPTER FOUR: Patience and Acquired Patience 12

CHAPTER FIVE: Types of Patience 13

CHAPTER SIX: Degrees of Patience 16

CHAPTER Seven: Types of Patience According to the Fields It Applies to 22

CHAPTER EIGHT: Patience According to the Five Rulings 25

CHAPTER NINE: The Difference Between the Degrees of Patience 29

CHAPTER TEN: The good and the bad patience 45

CHAPTER ELEVEN: The difference between the patience of noble and ignoble people 54

CHAPTER TWELVE: Factors that Support Patience 56

CHAPTER THIRTEEN: Patience Is Indispensable 74

CHAPTER FOURTEEN: The Hardest Form of Patience 90

CHAPTER FIFTEEN: Patience in the Qur`an 95

CHAPTER SIXTEEN: Patience in the Sunnah 112

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN: Patience as observed by the Companions and their successors 131

Chapter Eighteen: Reactions to bereavement 146

Chapter Nineteen: Patience is a half of belief 172

Chapter Twenty: Which has Priority: Patience or Gratitude? 181

CHAPTER TWENTY ONE : How to Settle the Argument 257

Chapter Twenty Two: Debate about the Superiority between the Grateful Rich and the Patient Poor 310

Chapter Twenty Three: Textual Proofs of the Poor 328

Chapter Twenty Four: Textual Proofs of the Rich 447

Chapter Twenty-five: What Contradict Patience 485

Chapter Twenty-Six: Patience and Gratitude as derived from Allah's Attributes 491

Conclusion 504

Preface

This book represents an authoritative treatment for a variety of topics concerning the Muslim psychology. It also helps the readers get acquainted to the Muslim thinking and mentality. No matter how severe affliction or excessive joy a Muslim may get, he is supposed to be patient or grateful. Nothing can influence his mentality or. Overwhelm his heart. The more afflicted or pleased the more patient or grateful.

In translating this book the translators attempted to study and analyze some books published in the same field in order to be consistent. Although the book was written in the same style and wording used by the early Muslim scholars,' the translators, in turn, have nothing but to assimilate, paraphrase and then trans.-late it in a simple English structure. Therefore, we are indebted to our translators: **`Abdel-Hamid A. `Eliwa, Wa'il A. Shehab, Muhammad M. `Abdel-Fattah, Hanan M. `Amir, Walid Bayyumi.**

Great appreciation is due to our editor, **Jeewan**

Chanicka and **Salma Cook** under whose guidance and supervision the subject matter took form. Our gratitude goes to friends, associates, and professors for their valuable advice and help and for many useful things we have learnt from them.

In truth, the benefit yielded from this book as a spiritual sermon began before it was sent to the printer's as it puts before our eyes the abode, which we are going to.

Introduction

Praise be to Allah, the Most High, the Greatest, the All-Knowing, the All-Hearing, and the Almighty. Praise be to Allah to Whom all Power and Praise belong and Who is able to do everything. It is He to whom the final goal is, and it is He Who knows all that which hearts contain.

I testify that there is no god but Allah, Who has neither a match nor a partner, and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah and the best of all His servants.

May the blessings and peace of Allah be upon the Messenger, who adhered to patience and gratitude to the extent that no one could reach his degree, neither from among the patient nor the grateful. Allah had called the Prophet's nation "the praisers" be-fore He created them because He knew that they would praise Him on all occasions,' good or bad. He, the Almighty has given this nation the virtue of being the first to get to the Abode of reward and punishment on the Day of Judgement. The nearest of His creatures to Him are those who praise and remember Him in the best way and the highest among them

are the most patient and grateful.

Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) has made patience as firm as a horse that never stumbles and as effective as a sharp sword. Therefore, it is always regarded as the basic step of victory; there is no victory without patience. It is more sufficient for people than the strongest weapon. Allah the Almighty has granted the patient the privilege of receiving His support in particular, both in this world and the next. He has also made patience a major requisite of leadership.

It is very difficult to limit the characteristics of patience. It is better in every way for those who hold to it. As long as you are patient and conscious of Allah, no evil plan can harm you. Moreover, it leads to glory, dignity and success. As a whole, it is enough that Allah, the Most High, has stated that He loves the patient.

In the Qur`an, Allah (Glory be to Him) gives glad tidings to the patient, everyone of which is better than all worldly pleasures:

"But give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere, who say, when afflicted with calamity: "To Allah we belong, and to Him is our return": they are those on whom (descend) blessings from their Lord, and Mercy. And they are the ones that receive guidance."

(Al-Baqarah: 155-157)

He, moreover revealed such a statement that is confirmed with His swearing:

"By the time, verily Man is in loss, except such as have Faith, and do righteous deeds, and (join together) in the mutual enjoining of Truth, and of Patience and Constancy.

(Al-`Asr: 1-3)

In four verses of the Qur`an, Allah stresses with the same words that it is the patient and the grateful who get the benefit of His signs: "Verily in this there are Signs for such as are firmly patient and constant, grateful and appreciative."

These are just a few examples, for the scope of patience and gratitude is too wide to cover in an introduction. In short, we may highlight the fact that the best of life is obtained with patience, and the highest position is reached with gratitude. Accordingly, those who keep to both of these, they in fact fly to Paradise between two wings: patience and gratitude, This is a favor of Allah that He bestows upon whomever He wills, for He is the Lord of grace abounding.

CHAPTER ONE

Definition of Patience

The Arabic word *Sabr* means restriction and detention. In Islam, it means to prevent one's soul from reaching the point of despair and panic, and to refrain from tearing one's clothes out of grief. It is a classical word mentioned in the Glorious Qur`an, the *Hadith,* and the Arab poetry. In the Glorious Qur`an, we read,

> ﴿ And keep yourself content with those who call on their Lord morning and evening, seeking His face.﴾
>
> (Al-Kahf: 28)

In a *hadith* concerning two people, one of whom held a man to be killed by the other, the Prophet (pbuh) said,

> " The killer must be killed and the *Sabir* must be put into *Sabr.*"

The meaning is that who detained the man and let the other kill him must suffer the same punishment.

There is also an Arabic expression that reads: So - and so was killed by *Sabr,* i.e., he was held captive and detained until he died.

Al-Bukhari reported on the authority of Anas Ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) that "the Prophet (pbuh) forbids the flesh of the livestock which was put into *Sabr,"* i.e, it is unlawful to eat the flesh of a goat or a hen etc. which died while detained.

CHAPTER TWO

The Reality of Patience

Patience can be defined as a manner of spiritual superiority by virtue of which we refrain ourselves from doing evil. It is also a faculty of the intellect that enables us to live properly in this world.

Al-Junaid said, "Patience is to keep calmly content while facing affliction." Dhu-Nun said, "It is to restrain yourself from ill-conduct, remain quiet during affliction and without complaining." Abu Uthman said, "The one who has patience is the one who had trained himself to handle hardships."

`Amr Ibn `Uthman Al-Makki said, "Patience means to keep close to Allah and to accept calmly the trials He sends, without complaining or feeling sad." Al-Khawwas said: "Patience is to adhere to the injunctions of the Qur`an and *Sunnah.*" Ruwaim said, "Patience means to refrain from complaining." Another scholar said, "Patience means to seek Allah's help." Abu Muhammad Al-Hariri said,

> " Patience means that there is no difference in behavior in times of prosperity and that of adversity and to be content at all times."

The author of this book is of the opinion that: This is beyond our ability and we are not capable of being like that. Allah had created us in such a way, that we feel deeply the difference between these two conditions.

At times we can hardly refrain from panicking during adversity, but patience does not mean we have the same feeling during times of ease and times of hardship. The Prophet (pbuh) said, in his well-know *Du`a`*,

> " If You are not angry with me, then I do not bother about anything that happens to me but still I would rather have Your blessings and Favor."[1]

This does not contradict the *hadith* which states,

---

[1] This Du`a` is said by the Prophet (pbuh) when he went back from the town of Ta'if after being rejected by its people.

" No one had ever been given anything better than patience."[2]

Man, by nature, prefers prosperity but when he meets with affliction which is inevitable, patience is the best quality.

Abu `Ali Ad-Daqqaq said, "Patience means not to object to your fate." Expressing that one is afflicted, without complaining, does not contradict patience.

Complaint is of two kinds:

(1) To complain to Allah, and this does not contradict patience. The Qur`an states the words of Y`aqub (pbuh),

﴾ I only complain of my distraction and anguish to Allah. ﴿

(Yusuf: 86)

[2] Reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

He himself previously said,

﴾ So patience is most fitting (for me). ﴿

(Yusuf: 83)

Although Ayyub (pbuh) was described in the Glorious Qur`an as patient, the Qur`an states the following words of him,

﴾ Truly distress has seized me. ﴿

(Al-Anbiya`: 83)

Likewise, the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) complained to Allah, saying,

> "O Allah, I complain to You of my weakness and helplessness."

Musa (pbuh) prayed to Allah saying,

> "Oh Allah, praise is to You, and complaint is made only to You. You are the only One Whose help we seek, and in whom we put our trust, and there is no power or might except Yours."

(2) To complain to people by either speech or behavior. This is contradictory to patience.

It was also said, "Patience is courage." Therefore, people say: Courage is to be patient for a brief time.

The soul is the mount on which we ride to Paradise or Hell-fire, and patience is its rein. Without a rein, the animal may redirect its course.

Al-Hajjaj said, "Suppress your own souls, because they are looking forward to committing sins. May Allah have mercy on whomever that has bound it to Allah's obediene; keeping away from disobedience to Allah. To be patient, keeping away from Allah's forbidden things, is easier than to be patient in His punishment.

Every person has two forces: driving and restrainng. The driving force pushes him towards what benefits him and the other, holds him back from what harms him.

Some people can only be patient during a situation that is advantageous to them, but regarding harmful

situations they become weak. They might have enough patience when performing acts of worship, but have no patience in suppressing their desires. On the other hand, there are some people who have a lot of patience in controlling their desires but fail to keep patient when performing acts of worship. Some other people have no patience in either.

Undoubtedly, the best people are those who master the two types of patience.

There may be a man who can remain patient when standing all the night in Prayer, enduring hot or cold weather and spending the daytime fasting. However, such a man may not be able to remain patient when he knows he should lower his gaze and not look at women. Another may easily control his gaze but he cannot be patient in enjoining the good and forbidding the evil or to fight against disbelievers in the cause of Allah.

Someone said, "To have patience means that one's reason and religious incentives are stronger than one's

whims and desires." People have been created in such a way that they incline towards their desires but reason and religious incentives suppress such inclinations. There is an ongoing war between the two extremes: they win one another. The battlefield is one's heart, patience, courage and steadfastness.

CHAPTER THREE

Connotative Meanings of Patience

Patience takes on the name of what it refers to. It is called chastity if it is associated with restraining a sexual desire. If it refers to controlling one's stomach, it is called self-restraint. When referring to refraining from disclosing what is better to keep secret, it is called keeping one's secrets. If it consists of being content with what is sufficient for one's needs, it is called asceticism; but if it consists of being content of what someone has of worldly life, it is called self-content. If it refers to controlling one's nerves when angry, it is called forbearance. When it refers to desisting from haste, it is called gracefulness. If it refers to not fleeing or running away, it is called courage.

If it refers to refraining from taking revenge, it is called forgiveness. If it refers to not being stingy, it is called generosity. When it refers to abstaining from food and drink for a specific period, it is called fasting. If it consists of refraining from being helpless and lazy, it is

called discretion.

If it refers to refraining from loading other people with burdens and not leaving their burdens aside, it is called chivalry.

In conclusion, patience has various names according to the situation it applies to, but all of them are included under patience. This indicates that all tenets and rites of Islam are associated with patience.

CHAPTER FOUR

Patience and Acquired Patience

If a man is able, by his nature, to refrain from ill-conduct, he is called patient by nature. However, if he suffers a lot and trains himself until he acquires it, he is called patient by acquisition. The Prophet (pbuh) said,

> " Whoever trains himself to be patient, Allah will help him to be patient."

Likewise, a person can train himself to acquire any other good characteristics like chastity, so training develop good character. This means that whoever continues doing something habitually, these habits will lead him to incorporate this habit into his nature.

Man is able to learn and acquire new traits. The traits or the characteristics he acquires may be deep-rooted or superficial in his personality, owing to the extent of his acquisition. The stronger he acquires a trait, the more adherent he will be to it. But if such a trait is not deep-rooted, he may soon forget it.

CHAPTER FIVE

Types of Patience

Patience is of two types: physical and psychological. Each type may also be optional or obligatory. Thus, we have four types of patience:

1- Optional physical patience such as doing hard labor willingly.

2- Obligatory physical patience, such as enduring the pain of beatings, illness, wounds or cold or hot weather.

3- Optional psychological patience, such as refraining from doing ill-conduct that contradicts sacred knowledge or reason.

4- Obligatory psychological patience, such as enduring the pain of separation from one's loved ones who are beyond his reach.

The obligatory types of patience can be applied to human beings and animals, whereas the optional types

apply only to people. However, some people may only maintain patience for obligatory things, like animals, and forsake optional patience.

Qatada said,

> "Allah has created angels having ream maintain patience for obligatory things, like animals, and forsake optional patience".

Qatada said,

> "Allah has created angels having reason but with no desires, animals have desires and no reason, and man has both reason and desires. Therefore, if one's reason is stronger than his desires, he is like an angel. On the other hand, if his desires are stronger, he is like an animal".

While a human baby needs nothing but food, the patience he resorts to in this period is like an animal's. The older he grows, the stronger his patience by choice. Just as his sexual desire develops, his power of reasoning also

develops. By then he can realize what patience by choice really means. But pure patience is not enough to make him refrain from satisfying his desires. By the virtue of Allah's guidance and realizing the goals of life, he begins to think of his interests both in this life and the Hereafter. He then becomes aware of the requital he will get for doing different actions. As a warrior, who fights against an enemy, who equips and protects himself, he should do the same to overcome the worldly desires and interests.

CHAPTER SIX

Degrees of Patience

Patience has various degrees according to how effective or weak it is in resisting whims and desires. There are three degrees of patience in this respect:

1- The religious incentive which has the power to suppress whims and desires. This can be attained by consistent patience. Whoever reaches such a level of self-control is victorious in this world and the next. They are the ones described by Allah as those,

﴾ Who say, 'Our lord is Allah.﴿

(Fussilat: 30)

They are also the ones whom angels will address at the moment of their death by saying,

﴾ Fear not! Nor grieve! But receive the glad tidings of the Garden (of Bliss), that which you were promised! We are your protectors in this life and in the Hereafter.﴿

(Fussilat: 30-3 1)

Moreover, they are the ones who win the companionship of Allah. They, undoubtedly, strive in the cause of Allah and therefore deserve Allah's guidance.

2- When one's desires prevail, the religious incentive is misplaced. Such a man will totally surrender to the devil and its soldiers, who lead him wherever they want. He may either be one of their followers, as the case of a weak man, or the devil himself may become as his soldier, as in the case of people who blaspheme and rebel against Allah. They are those people whose misfortune has overtaken them because they preferred this world to the Hereafter. This is because they lost patience. They are characterized by deception, cheat, false hopes, wishful thinking, laziness in doing good, hope of long life and preference of worldly life to the Hereafter. The Prophet (pbuh) described such people by saying,

"The helpless man is the one who follows his

desires and indulges in wishful thinking."[1]

Such people are of different kinds. Some of them declare war against Allah and His Messenger, try to abolish the teachings of the Prophet (pbuh), prevent people to follow Allah's guidance and spread distortion and corruption among people. Some indulge only in worldly interests and desires. We might find some hypocrites behave according to worldly benefits. There may also be some people who devote their lives to the satisfaction of their desires. Some people may assume that repentance is their ultimate wish; but they assume that it is too difficult to do and furthermore they have no opportunity. Some claim that Allah, the Almighty, does not need what they do of prayers or fasting. Good deeds are not enough for salvation. Above all, Allah is Merciful and Oft-Forgiving. Others may also say, "What good could my worship do after all the evil actions I have committed? What can help a drowning man if his fingers are above water and the rest of

[1] Reported by Tirmidhi, ibn Majah and Ahmad.

his body is submerged?" Some others may say, "We will repent when death approaches."

Various excuses are heard from such deluded people whose main concern has become the worldly life. All they think of is the satisfaction of their lusts and desires. Such a man has become a prisoner to Satan, who exploits him in raising pigs, making wine and carrying the cross.

3- There is an ongoing war between religious incentive and one's desires. Sometime, the latter prevails and at other times the former may gain the upper hand. This is the case with many believers who mix good deeds with bad deeds. Each category of the three aforementioned groups of people, will meet the requital of what they have done in this worldly life. Some people will enter Paradise and others will never enter it, and some will enter Hell-fire for some time before they are admitted to Paradise.

Some people can hardly remain patient while others maintain patience easily. The first type is like two men

wrestling each other. No one can win without exerting great effort. The second type is like a man who wrestles with a weak man. He will surely beat him easily. Such is the ongoing war between the soldiers of Allah, the Merciful, and that of Satan. Whoever defeats Satan's soldiers can defeat Satan himself with the guidance and will of Allah.

`Abdullah Ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "Once, there was a wrestling between a man and one of the jinn in which the former beat the latter. Then he asked. "Why are you so weak and small?" The jinn answered, "I am one of the strongest jinn." Someone asked `Abdullah Ibn Mas`ud, "Was that man `Umar?' He replied, "Who else could do so?"

Some Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) said, "A believer whips Satan the way someone whips his camel while travelling."

Ibn `Abd-Dunia narrated from some of the early Muslims that two devils met each other one day. One of

them asked the other, "Why do you seem pale?" The other replied, "I have been enjoined to befriend a man who mentions the Name of Allah whenever he eats, so I cannot share his food. He also mentions Allah's Name when he drinks, so I cannot drink with him. When he enters his home, he mentions the Name of Allah, so I remain outside. On the other hand, the other devil said, "On the contrary, I have befriended a man who does not mention the Name of Allah when eating, drinking, entering his home or having intercourse with his wife, so I share with him in all he does." Therefore, whoever is accustomed to patience, his enemy fears him. But whoever finds it too difficult to apply, his enemy will readily dare to attack him and do him harm.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Types of Patience According to the Fields It Applies to

Patience is of three types:

1- Worshiping Allah and following His commands,

2- Refraining from bad deeds, and

3- Surrendering to Allah's decrees and destiny.

All these fields refer to what Allah wants His servant to do concerning His rulings. There are two kinds of Divine rulings: religious and predetermined, i.e., what He ordains of religions and predetermined. What He ordains of religious rulings has two types according to the field it applies to. If the field it applies to is desirable to the human nature, the status of what is required to be done is either obligatory or recommended. Only by remaining patient can we conform to such rulings. But if the field is undesirable, then the status of what is required, is either unlawful or offensive. We also cannot do so but by patience.

Concerning predetermined rulings, it includes the Thus the commandment given by Luqman when he advised his son,

> ﴾ Oh my son! Establish regular prayer, enjoin what is just and forbid what is wrong; and bear with patient constancy whatever betide thee; for this is the Firmness (of purpose) in (the conduct of) affairs.﴿
>
> (Luqman: 17)

Enjoining what is just includes doing good and advising others to do so, as is forbidding what is wrong.[1]

Again these three fields are mentioned in Allah's statement:

> ﴾ It is those who are endued with understanding that receive admonition; those who fulfill the covenant of Allah and fail not in their plighted word; those who join together those things which Allah hath commanded to be

[1] This is the opinion of Imam Ahmad.

joined, hold their Lord in awe, and fear the terrible reckoning; those who patiently persevere, seeking the countenance of their Lord; establish regular prayers, spend out of (the gifts) We have bestowed for their sustenance, secretly and openly; and turn off Evil with good: for such there is the final attainment of the Eternal Home,﴿

(Ar-R&d: 19-22)

CHAPTER EIGHT

Patience According to the Five Rulings

Patience is divided into *Wajib* (obligatory), *Mandub* (recommended), *Mahdhur* (interdict), *Makruh* (reprehensible) and *Mubah* (permissible).

Obligatory patience has three kinds: patience in abstaining from what is forbidden, patience in performing what is obligatory, and patience during calamities which are beyond man's control like illness, poverty and others.

Recommended patience is that is held in abstaining from what is disliked, in performing what is liked and in abstaining from taking revenge from others.

Interdict patience has many kinds. For example, there are holding patience in abstaining from eating and drinking to death, and abstaining from eating dead meat, blood and pork during famine when death is inevitable unless man eats them. Tawus and Imam Ahmad said: Whoever is

obliged to eat dead meat or blood and he does not and then he dies, he will enter Hell-Fire."

If someone asked: "What about holding patience in abstaining from begging?" The companions of Imam Ahmad said that this kind of patience is permissible.

"But what if a man fears that if he does not beg, he will die?" It was said that he will not, for Allah will give him his means of livelihood. Many of the companions of Ahmad and Ash-Shafi`i maintained that he has to beg and if he does not, he will be disobedient because begging will be his protection from death.

Interdict patience includes calmness and forbearance in whatever causes one's death like lions, snakes, fire, or an unbeliever who wants to kill him. It also includes patience in the face of *Fitnah* (turmoil and seduction).

The prophet (pbuh) was asked about this matter and he said:

"Be like the best of Adam's sons."

In addition, he said in another tradition:

"Be like the servant of Allah who is killed and do not be like the servant of Allah who kills."

And according to another narration:

"Let him carry his sin and your sin.",

and another narration reads:

"If the brightness of the sword dazzles you, put your hands over your face."

Allah, the Most High, narrated the surrender of the best of Adam's sons and how Allah praised him. On the other hand, the Muslim must kill the unbeliever because he has to defend himself and the main reason for Jihad is to defend oneself and Muslims.

Reprehensible patience has many forms, such as patience in abstaining from food, drink, clothes and sex with one's wife on condition that she agrees on it and that this does not cause harm to him. Also, there are patience in abstaining from what is harmful, and patience in doing

what is liked or in doing good deeds.

Permissible patience is to hold patience in abstaining from deeds, which one can either choose to do it or not.

CHAPTER NINE

The Difference Between the Degrees of Patience

As it has been mentioned before, patience is of two kinds: Voluntary and compulsory. Voluntary patience is more perfect than the compulsory one. All people perform acts which include compulsory patience, and it is handled by those who do not deal with voluntary patience. This was why the patience of the Truthful Yusuf (Joseph) in abstaining from being seduced by the wife of Al-`Aziz as well as his patience in prison and the harm he faced, was greater than his patience in what had happened to him when his brothers threw him into the well and thereby separated him from his father. As for his compulsory patience, it was in handling the power which Allah, the Most High, gave him in the kingdom of Al-`Aziz.

There was also the patience of Allah's Intimate

Friend (Ibraheem), *Kalimullah*[1] (Moses), Nuh (Noah), `Isa (Jesus) and the patience of the last Prophet, Muhammad (pbuh) in making the call of Islam and fighting against the enemies of Allah. For their patience, Allah called them the "Messengers of firm resolution" and He ordered His Messenger, Muhammad (pbuh) to be patient like them. He said:

> ﴿ Therefore patiently persevere, as did (all) messengers of firm resolution.﴾
>
> (Surah 46:35)

The people of patience are those who are mentioned in His saying:

> ﴿ The same religion has he established for you as that which He enjoined on Noah and that which We have sent by inspiration to theeand that which Were enjoined on Abraham, Moses, and Jesus.﴾
>
> (Surah 42:13)

(1) Kalimullah means Allah's interlocutor.

Moreover, Allah, the Most High, says:

> (And remember We took from the Prophets their Covenant and from thee: from Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus.)
>
> (Surah 33:7)

Ibn `Abbas and other Early Muslims held this. In addition, Allah, the Most High, ordered him not to be like the Companion of the Fish (Jonah) who was not patient like the Messengers of firm resolution in his saying:

> ﴾ So wait with patience for the Command of thy Lord, and be not like the Companion of the Fish, --when he cried out in agony. ﴿
>
> (Surah 68:48)

Then Allah praised him and told him that He had saved him because of his calling. He said:

> ﴾ And remember Dhu Nun, when he departed in Wrath: he imagined that we had no power over him! But he cried through the depths of darkness, "There is no god but Thou: Glory

be to Thee: I was indeed wrong!. ﴿

(Surah 21:87-88)

At-Tirmidhi narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) said:

> "The invocation of my brother Dhu Nun (Jonah) which he said while he was in the stomach of the whale, whoever is afflicted and says it, Allah will relieve his affliction:
>
> "There is no god but You. Glory be to you! I was indeed one of the oppressors."

Therefore, no one is forbidden to say the same invocation, as it was the invocation with which Jonah invoked his Lord. Nevertheless, Muslims are forbidden to do the same thing, which led to his ordeal, and made him call Allah to get him out of the stomach of the whale.

Some people of knowledge said that Allah forbids His Prophet in this verse to do the thing that caused Jonah's trouble, which was weakness of determination and patience regards Allah's judgment. Furthermore,

Allah does not say here that the Prophet (pbuh) should not be like the companion of the whale who made a mistake, was then swallowed by the whale and finally called out to Allah. Yet He summarized the story and concentrated on its end and objective.

Allah, the Most High, Praises Yunus (Jonah) and other prophets by allowing them to ask Him to relieve their afflictions. Allah praises Yunus by saying:

> ﴾ And remember Dhu Nun, when he departed in Wrath: he imagined that We had no power over him! But he cried through the depths of darkness, "There is no god but Thou: Glory be to Thee: I was indeed wrong! ﴿
>
> (Surah 21:87-88)

Allah also praises Ayyub (Job) by saying:

> ﴾ And (remember) Job, when he cried to his Lord "Truly distress has seized me, but Thou art the Most Merciful for those that are merciful. ﴿ (Surah 21:83)

He also praises Ya`qub (Jacob) by saying:

﴿ I only complain of my distraction and anguish to Allah. ﴾

(Surah 12: 86)

And he praises Musa (Moses) by saying:

﴿ O my Lord! Truly am I in (desperate) need of any good that Thou dost send me! ﴾

(Surah 28:24)

The prophet (pbuh) also complained to Allah by saying:

"O Allah! I complain to you of my weakness and helplessness."

Complaining to Allah does not contradict patience. Allah, the Most High, listens to His servant's complaints. Allah also blames he who does not return to Him when he is afflicted. Allah, the Most High, says:

﴿ We inflicted Punishment on them, but they humbled not themselves to their Lord, nor do

they submissively entreat (Him). ﴿

(Surah 23:76)

The servant is weak and Allah, the Most High, wants him to be patient and to seek help from Him. Allah hates those who complain about him to others and He loves those who complain only to Him. Someone asked a scholar how can he complain to the one who knows everything? The answer was that Allah is satisfied when the servant returns to Him while he is in a ease of humility.

What is meant by this is that Allah, the Most High, ordered His Messenger to be patient like the Messengers of firm resolution, who were patient in His Judgment. This is the perfect patience. On the Day of Judgment, they will commit intercession to the best of them, Muhammad. May Allah be pleased with all of them!

If someone asked, "What is the perfect type of patience: patience in what is ordered, patience in abstaining from what is forbidden, or patience in what is destined?" The answer would be that patience which is related to

orders and prohibition is better than patience in what is destined. The believer and unbeliever can be patient. Everybody has to be patient in what is destined, whether they like it or not. On the other hand, patience in what is ordered and what is forbidden is the patience of the followers of the Prophets. The best of them is the most patient.

If someone asked, "Which patience is better to Allah, patience in what is ordered by Allah or patience in abstaining from what is forbidden? The answer would be that this subject has many points of views. A group of scholars said that patience in abstaining from what is forbidden is better because it is more difficult. Good deeds can be performed by both the believer and the unbeliever, and no one can be patient in abstaining from what is forbidden except the truthful.

It is also said that when a person leaves what he loves, this is evidence that the reason behind his action is dearer to him than his soul. Others said that courage and

magnanimity are related to this type of patience. Imam Ahmad said: "Magnanimity is to leave what you like, for what you fear." Thus, the courage and magnanimity of the servant of Allah is according to this patience.

Another opinion held that there is no wonder if a man is patient in what is ordered. Most of these orders are dear to the righteous soul in accordance with its justice, benevolence, sincerity and piety. But it is a wonder when someone is patient in abstaining from what is forbidden, which often includes things that are dearest to the soul. This is when a person leaves the good things in life for the good things in the Hereafter.

What is forbidden, calls for four things: the soul of the human being, his devil, his affliction and his life. He does not leave them without striving and this is the most difficult thing for the soul. Abstaining from what is forbidden is considered a protection of the soul from its desires and carnal pleasures. The Prophet (pbuh) said:

"If I order you by an order, you have to do it

as best as you can and what I prohibit you from, (likewise) you have to avoid it."[1]

Another group of scholars said that patience in what is ordered is better than patience in abstaining from what is forbidden because to perform what is ordered is dearer to Allah.

This point, however, has different aspects of clarification.

First, to perform what is ordered is a legislated action. Allah created the whole creation to worship Him, believe that He is the One, and trust in Him and to be satisfied with Him. Allah forbids what is forbidden because it prevents His servants from performing what he has ordered. For example, Allah, the Most High, forbids wine and gambling because He knows that they will prevent His servants from remembering Him and from Prayer.

[1] Transmitted by Al-Bukhari (7288) and Muslim (1337).

Second, the orders are related to Allah, His worship, remembrance, love and trust.

Third, the need of the servant to perform what is ordered, is greater than his need to avoid what is forbidden. There is nothing greater than to know Allah and to be sincere to Him, to believe in His Oneness and to love and obey Him. This need is dearer to man than his soul and his soul is dearer to him than food, which builds his body. However, to be obedient to Allah is better for both his heart and soul.

Fourth, all sins are related to two things: to avoid what is ordered and to perform what is forbidden. If a person performs all things that are forbidden until he does a small thing related to what is ordered, he would be saved from the eternal Hell-Fire. Likewise, if he avoids what is forbidden and neglects to perform any order of belief, he will be one of the dwellers of the Fire.

Fifth, when a person performs what is forbidden, it could be forgiven by repentance.

Sixth, the sin of Adam was his performance of what was forbidden and then Allah accepted his repentance and forgave him. The sin of Satan is that he disobeyed what was ordered; Allah punished him, as mentioned in the Qur`an, and has made it a warning till the Day of Judgment.

Seventh, Allah loves what is ordered and detests what is forbidden. The expectation of the servant is to repent, ask for pardon and to be submissive and the decree of Allah is to forgive him. Allah destined that what seems harmful is the way to what He loves. Allah, the Most High, created the whole creation to perform what He loves, that He alone is to be worshipped. Allah, the Most High, says:

> ﴾ I have only created Jinns and men, that they may serve Me.﴿

(Surah 5 1:56)

Eighth, when the servant avoids what is forbidden, Allah will not reward him until He compares it with what he has performed from the orders of belief. Also, the

believer will not be rewarded for avoiding what is forbidden until it is compared with his intention.

Ninth, the reward of what is ordered is equaled by ten grades and this may be increased according to Allah's will. On the other hand, what is forbidden is considered only one sin and it could be forgiven by repentance.

Tenth, Allah forgives the sins of the servant during his life in six ways: by repentance, the invocation of the believers, the Angels' asking for pardoning him, expiation of sin, asking for forgiveness, or by the accepted deeds. There are two other ways during his death, which are death itself and its affliction. It could be by the terror and the alarm of the two Angels in the grave, by intercession, or by Allah's Mercy and He is the Most Merciful. If all these things are of no use, he must enter Hell-Fire and stay there according to his sins.

Eleventh, the reward of orders is recompense and it is related to mercy, benevolence and favor. The punishment of what is forbidden is related to anger and justice. The

Mercy of the Most High comes before His Anger. So, what is related to mercy and favor is dearer to Allah than what is related to anger and justice. To neglect what is related to mercy is detestable to Allah than to do what is related to anger.

Twelfth, to perform what is ordered is the basic part of the order. It is considered perfection. If the servant performs the order, he will be perfect. For example, to avoid bowing to idols is not perfection, but perfection is to bow to Allah. Another example, if a person stops telling lies about the Messenger, he is not considered a believer until he believes in him, and loves and obey him.

Thirteenth, Allah orders His servant to perform some things and avoid others. If he performs both of them, then what Allah likes and hates is performed, but the good things which he has done could expiate the bad ones. For example, a king may order his servant to kill his enemy and he does, and he may order him not to drink wine but he does. The first action could expiate the second. Allah

created all His creatures like this. This can be noticed in the treatment between leaders and servants. parents and children, kings and soldiers, and between wives and husbands.

Fourteenth, the one who performs what Allah Loves cannot perform all forbidden things, but if he avoids what is ordered, then he does not perform what Allah likes him to do because to avoid forbidden things is not considered obedience without performing the orders.

Fifteenth, Allah loves the repentant, the benevolent, the thankful, the patient, the pure people, the people who strive for His sake, the people who fear Him and the people who give charity. Allah, the Most High says:

> ﴾ I have only created Jinns and men, that they may serve Me.﴿

(Surah 5 1:56)

Allah created the whole creation for only one reason, which is to follow His Rules.

Sixteenth, Allah forbade things because He knows that they will delay and contradict His orders.

Finally, it may now be clear that performing orders is better, and the patience contained in it, is the best kind of patience. By this, patience will be easy in abstaining from what is forbidden and in what is destined.

CHAPTER TEN

The Good and the Bad Patience

Bad patience is to be patient in abstaining from Allah, His Love and His Will because this prevents man from being perfect and doing what he was created for. This is the worst and the most difficult type of patience. There is no religious devotion greater than holding asceticism concerning what Allah has prepared for His followers which no eye has ever seen or ear has ever heard.[1]

Once a man said to an ascetic: "I have never seen an ascetic like you!" He said; "Your asceticism is stronger than mine because my asceticism is connected to this life, which is short and yours is connected to the Hereafter. So, which of us is better?"

A man asked Shibli: "Which type of patience is most

[1] Holding asceticism in this regard means that man does not seek what Allah has prepared for His pious servants in its own right. Rather, he seeks Allah's satisfaction and wishes for His reward.(Translator)

difficult for the patient?" He said, "Patience for the sake of Allah." The man said: "No" Then Shibli said: "Patience for Allah." The man said: "No." Shibli said, "Patience with Allah." He said: "No." Then Shibli said: "Then, what is it?" The man said: "Patience in abstaining from Allah." Then Shibli screamed as if he nearly died.

It was said that patience with Allah is fulfillment and patience in abstaining from Allah is harshness. All people agreed that patience in avoiding Allah is not praiseworthy.

Good patience is of two types: patience for Allah and patience with the help from Allah. Allah, the Most High, says:

> ﴾ And do thou be patient, for thy patience is but with the help from Allah..﴿

(Surah 16:127)

He also says:

> ﴾ Now await in patience the command of thy Lord: for verily thou art in our eyes. ﴿

(Surah 52:48)

There was a dispute between people about which of the two types is more perfect. A group of them said:

Patience for Allah is more perfect because what is done for Allah is perfect more than what is done by Allah. What is done for Allah is an objective and what is done by Him is a means. So, what is related to Allah is related to His Divinity. For this reason, to believe in His Divinity saves any person from polytheism. People of idolatry believed that Allah is the Creator and The Owner of this world but they did not believe in His Divinity, so their belief was useless for them.

Another opinion was that patience with the help from Allah is more perfect. To be patient for the sake of Allah depends on being patient with the Help from Allah. Allah, the Most High, says, ﴿ And do thou be patient. ﴾ Thus, He orders His servant to be patient. Then He says: ﴿ for thy patience is but with the help from Allah.﴾ This refers to the fact that he could not be patient without the help from

Allah. Moreover, we read in a *Qudsi Hadith:*

> "By Me he hears, by Me he sees, by Me he strikes and by Me he walks"[1]

This *Hadith* refers to the believer who performs the supererogatory Prayer till Allah loves him. As a result of that, Allah will be with him in whatever he does. Whoever is not patient with the help from Allah is like the one who does not wish to be near to Allah. This is what is meant by: "I am his hearing with which he hears and his sight with which he sees and his hand with which he strikes and his legs with which he walks." This does not mean the physical organs, as was said by the enemies of Allah, but this saying is interpreted by the *Hadith:* "By Me he hears, by Me he sees, by Me he strikes and by Me he walks."

In another *Qudsi Hadith,* Allah said;

"I am an associate to whoever mentions Me."

---

[1] Transmitted by Al-Bukhari (6502)

Allah also said:

> "I am with My servant whenever he mentions Me and moves his lips for Me."

In another *Hadith:*

> "If I love My servant I will be his hearing, sight, hand and supporter."

In this connection, there is a point that must be taken into consideration, that whoever loves an attribute of Allah, it will be a link between him and Allah. Allah is the Most Patient and there is no one who is more patient than Him.

It was related that Allah inspired Dawud (David) and said: "Have My attributes. One of My attributes is that I am the Most Patient." Allah loves His attributes and names and He loves to see the effect of them on His servants. He is the Most Beautiful and He likes beauty. He is the All-Forgiving and He likes forgiveness. He is the Most Generous and He likes generosity. He is the All-Knowing

and He likes people of knowledge. He is the Most Strong and He loves the strong believer more than the weak one. He is the Most Patient and He loves the patient from among His worshipers. He is the All-Thankful and he loves those who are thankful.

Another group added another type of patience, namely patience with Allah, which means loyalty. Others said that patience with Allah is the patience in what Allah has destined, ordered and forbidden.

Other people added patience in what is related to Allah and it is like patience for Allah. Allah, the Most High, says:

﴾ And those who strive in Our (Cause),-We will certainly guide them to our Paths. ﴿

(Surah 29:69)

He also says:

﴾ And strive in His cause. ﴿

(Surah 22:78)

It was related that Jabir said: "When Allah resurrected my father He said: "Say your wish." He said: "O my Lord! I wish that You return me back to life to be killed again for Your sake."

From this we realize two things. The first one is the importance of being patient for Allah, and for His obedience, and man does this with his own choice. The second thing is that whatever happens to man is from Allah's will and not from the hand of any person.

Some people say: "Patience with the help from Allah brings immortality." This means that if the servant of Allah is patient with the help from Allah, everything will become easy. Their saying: "Patience with Allah is fulfillment." means that patience with Him is perseverance in His orders. Allah, the Most High, says:

> ﴾ And of Abraham who fulfilled his (commandments), ﴿

(Surah 53:37)

As for their saying: "Patience in abstaining from Allah is harshness.", it means that there is no harshness greater than this. There is no life, peace or comfort without Allah's love and nearness. Moreover, what was said by Ya`qub (as the Qur`an states) refers to this. He said:

﴾ (For me) patience is most fitting. ﴿

(Surah 12:18)

Then his longing for his son, Yusuf (Joseph) made him say:

﴾ How great is my grief for Joseph! ﴿

(Surah 12:84)

This does not contradict the first saying, but it means that he did not complain to others. Ya`qub said (also as the Qur`an states):

﴾ I only complain of my distraction and anguish
to Allah. ﴿

(Surah 12:86)

In this connection, we may remember that Allah, the Most High, ordered His Messenger Muhammad (pbuh) to hold the most fitting patience and he obeyed Him and said:

> "O Allah! I complain to You of my weakness
> and helplessness."

Some scholars added another type of patience and called it "holding patience in the face of patience".

They said it means that man holds patience so deeply to the extent that be becomes unable to be patient.

Actually, this is involved in the other types of patience, as it denotes perseverance in holding patience. Afterall, Allah knows best.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Difference Between

The Patience of Noble and Ignoble People

Everybody has to be patient in facing difficulties whether voluntarily or by compulsion. The patience of noble people is voluntary because they believe in the benefits of patience and they know that they will be rewarded for it. They also know that they will be criticized if they panic. They know that if they panic, this will not regain what they have missed and will not prevent what they dislike. There is no one who can prevent what is destined to happen. So, the harm of panic is more than its usefulness. A wise man said: "When anything bad happens to a wise man, he does what a foolish man does after a month."

The patience of ignoble people is compulsory. Firstly, they panic and when they realize that it is useless, then, they become patient as the patience of those who are tied up to be beaten.

The noble person practices patience in obeying Allah. On the other hand, the ignoble one practices it in obeying Satan. The ignoble people are the most patient people in following their desires and the noble ones are so but in obeying their Lord. They endure difficulties for their desires but cannot face even a small difficulty for their lord. They avoid enjoining the good and forbidding the evil because of the fear of what the others will say about them.

Those people will never be noble in the sight of Allah, and on the Day of Judgement, they will not be raised with noble people. This is only for people who deserve nobility and fear Allah on that Day.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Factors that Support Patience

Since Allah has commanded patience, He has also provided some means that lead to and support it. Whenever Allah ordains something, He grants the necessary help and appoints the way to maintain it.

Allah never inflicts a disease except He provides its remedy by which, recovery is ensured, if He wills.

Though difficult for the soul, patience is possible to attain and something to strive for. Patience has two aspects: theory and practice. In these, cures of the hearts and the body are found.

The theoretical aspect, as well as the practical, should be present so that the most effective treatment may be facilitated.

The theoretical aspect requires us to get acquainted with goodness, benefits, bliss and perfection of this obligation; as well as the evil and harm of what is forbidden.

When both are realized, and man adds to them his truthful resolution, powerful will and his sense of honor, patience is the result. When this occurs, hardships become of little importance, bitterness become pleasure and man's agonies become joy.

There is a continual struggle between patience and impatience. Both seek victory over the other but the only way to true success is to support one at the cost of the other.

When one's lusts and whims become stronger and gain supremacy, to the point that relief is unavailable, man is usually tempted by promises of gratification and dissuaded from the Divine Remembrance and contemplation of what is beneficial to him both in this world and the Hereafter. However, if he is resolved to treat himself and resist such a spiritual infection, he can overcome it by observing the following:

First, the negative side of the desires is nourished by that which stimulates and stirs it into action. So to weaken

the effect of this process, we should avoid the stimulus such as excessiveness in food. Fasting helps to control and cure the desires, especially if the fast is broken with a modest meal.

Second, to avoid the effect of envy often stimulated by actions like gazing the eyes should be lowered as much as possible. The motivation of one's will and desire, with which the heart may be moved, are stirred by gazing. Abu Hudhaifah reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said,

"A gazing is a poisonous arrow of Satan's".

Satan sends its arrow against an unarmored heart.

By "armor", here, we mean either lowering one's eyes or diverting them. Such an arrow is thrown from the bow of physical forms. If you abandon it, it misses its target, otherwise the heart would be smitten.

Third, pleasure should be sought in what is permissible. Man's natural instincts can be satisfied with what Allah has permitted. As pointed out by the Messenger

(pbuh), this is an effective treatment prescribed for most people.

Fourth, to ponder the harms of wrong-doing in this world. In fact, if there were neither Paradise nor Hell, contemplating the harms of wrong-doing in this world would be sufficient to lead man away from doing wrong.

Fifth, to think of the ugly aspects of the evil inclinations and whims of his soul. A man, having even the slightest sense of honor, naturally dislikes to be involved in any evil affairs.

The Incentive of Religion

The incentive of religion is empowered by:

1- Glorifying Allah: This means to glorify Allah by refraining from disobedience for He is Ever-Hearing and Ever-Watching. When your heart is full of Divine sublimity, you cannot act sinfully.

2- Loving the Creator: If the heart is full of the love of Allah, man gives up all sins. Indeed, love

commands obedience.

3- Gratefulness to the Divine Bounty and Beneficence: A virtuous person can never repay his benefactor with offensive deeds. This is something only the wicked can do. One should fall down in disgrace, out of humility, as he recognizes Allah's bounties being continually sent down to him, then any repulsive sins seem all the more detestable.

4- Fearing Allah's wrath and Punishment: If man insists on rebellion, Allah's wrath descends upon him. His wrath cannot be resisted. At the same time, man is weak by nature, so, is in constant need of Allah's Mercy and Guidance.

5- Expecting loss because of sin: Sinful man is in a state of loss in as much as he loses good both in this world and the next. The smallest atom of faith is better than the whole universe. How can man desire to relinquish it? Can he trade it for a brief moment of pleasure that fades away in no time, but whose

consequences will be felt forever. Desires languish while misery remains. Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (pbuh) said,

"He who commits adultery is not a believer (at the moment of his sin)."

According to some Companions of the Prophet (pbuh), faith is taken away from him like an umbrella from over his head. When he repents, he obtains it once more.

6- Longing for a victory over one's self and Satan: when man controls his desires and overcomes he finds sweetness and delight in his heart. It is a greater victory than one over human enemies. It is also more impressive and pleasurable. Its outcome is more praiseworthy. It is similar to the effective remedy that treats the ailments of one's body and health.

7- Anticipating the compensation from Allah: Allah has promised to compensate His servants for giving up

what is forbidden, and for restraining their desires. They are entitled to weigh each of them against one another and choose the one having preference, so as to be content.

8- Seeking Allah's aid: The Glorious Qur`an, in more than one Ayah, speaks about the happy persons whom Allah will aid and support. Allah, Most High, says,

﴾ For Allah is with those who patiently preserver ﴿

(Al-Baqarah: 153)

﴾ For Allah is with those who restrain themselves, and those who do good. ﴿

(An-Nahl: 128)

﴾ For verily Allah is with those who do right. ﴿

(Al-`Ankabut: 69)

Allah's aid is better for man in this world and in the Hereafter. Eternal success and happiness is so much more desirable a short joy in the brief period of our lives.

9- Worrying about unexpected death: Always in the back of man's mind is the fear of death, which can take him by surprise at any time. The time of death is unknown for anyone. At the moment of death, the sinful man regrets for his negligence and disobedience. We will not appreciate this fully until our lives are over and it is too late.

10- Making distinction between the real affliction and the well-being: Experiencing tribulation is often related to sins and their consequences while well-being comes from obedience to Allah as a reward and a mercy. Earlier scholars have said, "When we see people in great difficulty, we should ask Allah for well-being. When people try to evade performing their obligations to Allah, become willfully disobedient and negligent in remembering

Allah, then affliction follows.

11- Training one's self to overcome whims and evil desires: Training is necessary to develop the incentive to fight against negative desires until the sweetness of victory is felt, which in turn strengthens resolution. Experiencing and overcoming hardship is a part of this development. If man withdraws from this battle of the desires, his religion would weaken, and his desires would flourish. If a man can accustom himself to oppose his desires, he would subdue them.

12- Combating the evil inspirations: If man finds his desires overcoming him, he should strongly combat them. He should neither accommodate nor encourage them, for they grow into wishful thinking. Unless man curbs his inclinations, they turn into aspirations, then worries and anxieties, and finally they become resolutions that are united with intentions and actions. It is therefore easier to

dispel the first inclination than to ward off its consequences.

13- Steering clear of relations and means that entice man to incline to his desires. It is not intended that man should have no desires, but that he should turn them into something beneficial and employ them in carrying out Allah's commands.

In that way, he would be saved from evil, which is the consequence of disobedience to Allah. If he fails to do this, he would be utterly destroyed.

Every effort and intention must be dedicated to Allah. If man makes it a habit to act for Allah's sake, he would find it most difficult to serve anything else. On the other hand, he who gives himself up to his whims finds it most difficult to serve Allah sincerely.

14- Pondering on Allah's signs, over which He has invited humans to meditate. These are Allah's miracles, which He has manifested to us. When

man's heart becomes in tune with these wonderful sings. it shuns evil temptations. We wonder at the foolishness of the one who incurs the wrath of Allah and is indifferent to His scriptures and His Messengers. All in all, such a man has given himself up to Satan.

15- Thinking over this world, its transience and its inevitable end. As a result, we find only the malicious and the hard-hearted who find contentment in preparing for their eternal life with the vilest of what the world has to offer. If man only knew the reality of this world and what it contains, he would know that there is little here to benefit him. Violent grief follows those who seek only the world without thought of the Hereafter. Imagine! How could you strive for a profit that only brings chastisement?

16- Persisting on invoking Allah, Who captures all hearts, ordains all affairs, and to whom everything

returns. In doing so, man's invocation is ought to be answered, particularly when his supplication meets with a time in which Allah promises to answer the call of His servants.

Let man never feel distressed due to his outward condition, because Allah tests him in compliance with "none is like unto Him, both in His Deeds and His Attributes. Allah deprives to bestow, afflicts a disease to prescribe its remedy, and takes lives to resurrect them. It was said

"Oh ye, Adam! Never be disheartened of My saying: 'Get out of the Garden,' as I have created it for you and you will be accommodated therein once more."

17- Realizing that man faces two enticing tendencies: good and evil. In fact, his tribulation lies between them. He is either attracted to the supreme companion, Allah, to be a resident of the uppermost Heaven, or he is reduced to the lowest statues in

the company of the dwellers of Hell. By responding to either one, man reaps its consequences. Whenever he wants to know to which category he belongs, let him consider the whereabouts of his spirit in this world. Upon death, man's spirit descends to the Supreme Lord, to Whom it was already attached to by nature. This is natural for him, to enjoy the company of his beloved Lord.

Everyone yearns for what he aspires for. Allah, Most High, says,

﴿ Everyone acts according to his own disposition. ﴾

(17: 84)

Accordingly, the pious people seek and hold fast to Allah, Most High, while the wicked follow their own desires.

18- Admitting that evacuation of one's land is necessary for receiving the showers of mercy. Unless

man frees his heart from desires and evil inclinations, he will never attain Divine Mercy. Hence, when man purges his heart from desires and evil inclinations and sows in it the seeds of Divine Remembrance, contemplation, love and sincere Devotion. This is when he obtains Allah's Mercy, and waits for its shower, so to speak. in due course. He becomes eligible to enjoy their fruit. Just as rain is strongly hoped for, so the answering of our prayer is earnestly expected in the recommended times for supplication. The hearts expect.

Help from Allah, especially, when resolutions come together, hearts support one another, and the congregation becomes as massive as the Day of *Arafa* and the Prayers for rain *(Istisqaa')* as well as the Friday prayer.

In fact, Allah has appointed these means for obtaining goodness and mercy; just as causes naturally lead to their effects. However, these spiritual causes are even more effective than material worldly ones in yielding their fruits.

But man, due to his ignorance and inequity, is so often overtaken by the worldly, rather than the wholesome spiritual aspects.[1]

If man forsakes his desires and reforms his heart, he will behold fascinating wonders. Allah's Grace and Bounty is withheld because of man's inner corruption.

When the impediments of the heart are removed, Allah's Grace and Bounty rushes to man from every side. It is like a great river that irrigates every land through which it passes. Likewise, one who neglects the heart may be compared to a landowner who complains of drought while the river is near form him.

19- Understanding that Allah has created him for an eternal life, for honor without disgrace, for affluence without destitution, for pleasure devoid of pain, for security purged from fear, and for integrity freed from deficiency. However, in this world,

---

[1] These spiritual aspects are called the 'Unseen' for they are not visible to the naked eye. (Translator)

Allah has tested man with a life that ends with death, honor that is often followed by disgrace, and security that is often overtaken by fear and anxiety. Everything, in the life of this world, is detected and rapidly repelled by its opposite.

Consequently, most humans err when they seek improperly for bounty, dominance and glory, and in this way man is removed from his high position. Additionally, despite man's efforts, too often he never achieves his aspirations and even if they are realized, are only fleeting pleasures. All of Allah's Messengers have been sent only with the call for eternal salvation and entry into the supreme kingdom. A man, who responds positively to their call, enjoys the best of this world and the next and his life will be more pleasant than that of kings.

Renouncing worldly pleasures is a means to power. Due to this, Satan is envious of the believer. As a result, he does his utmost to prevent him from reaching

his end.

When man controls his temper and desires, yields to religious incentives, he finds the true kingdom; for then he attains freedom. On the other hand, a king who gives himself up to his desires and temper becomes their servant, driven by them both. Only the fool mistakenly concentrates on outward sovereignty, while its reality is servitude. The lust that begins with pleasure ends up with grief.

20- Keeping in mind the fact that a mere knowledge of the above-mentioned is insufficient to obtain this end. Man must do his utmost to put them into practice.

To achieve this goal, man is required to forsake his customary practices, which are at odds with self-development and success. In fact, desires and prosperity hardly ever come together. The Messenger (pbuh) is reported to have said,

"Let him who hears of the Anti-Christ remain aloof."[1]

Thus, nothing helps more to get rid of evil than to ward off its means and its most likely whereabouts.

[1] Abu Dawud (4319), and Hakim (4/53 1).

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Patience Is Indispensable

Man is overwhelmed by various responsibilities: an injunction to which he must be obedient, a restriction which he must avoid, fate which overtakes him by surprise, and bliss to whose Benefactor he must give thanks. As these states are constantly surrounding him, persevering with patience is of paramount importance.

Whatever man experiences in the life of this world comes under two categories. The first is in harmony with his desires and inclinations, while the second is not. Patience is required in both cases.

The first type is concerned with things like health, influence, property, as well as all kinds of permitted pleasures.

In this respect, man is constantly in need of patience in various ways:

First: Man should never rely on worldly comforts

nor should they deceive him. Neither should they entice any noble heart to behave arrogantly.

Second: Man should never engage all his time and effort to achieve them, or even to inquire about them. Otherwise, the results will be at odds with his initial desire. Thus excessive eating, drinking and sex lead to utter deprivation.

Third: Man should be constant in rendering Allah's due therein. He must not forfeit it, otherwise the comforts he seeks will be taken away from him.

Fourth: Only the truthful receives prosperity with patience, so let man be patient is disposing of them so as to keep away from what is forbidden. He should rather curb his soul from doing as it pleases, for it could draw him into the unlawful. Even the soul that is well-armored could be led to shameful behavior.

Some Early Muslims said:

"Both the believer and disbeliever keep patient

in times of adversity, while only the truthful believer remains patient in times of ease, i.e., he does not contradict Allah's rule in both cases: adversity and in ease."

`Abdur-Rahman Ibn `Awf (may Allah be pleased with him) described the state of the Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) saying, "In times of adversity, we kept patient, while in times of ease some of us failed to remain patient."

Therefore, Allah has warned His servants against the test of wealth, children and wives. Allah says,

﴾ O ye who believe! Let not your riches or your children divert you from the remembrance of Allah.﴿

(Al-Munafiqun: 9)

He also says,

﴾ O ye who believe! Truly, among your wives and your children are (some that are) enemies to yourselves. ﴿ (At-Taghabun: 14)

'Enmity' here doesn't stand for hatred and severance of relations, it rather means love that prevents parents from migration, fighting in Allah's cause, acquiring knowledge and giving charity, etc.

At-Trimidhi reported that Smack Ibn ~Ikramah said:

> Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) was once asked about the above-mentioned *Ayah* (At-Taghabun: 14) when he said: "When some Mekkans adopted Islam, and intended to migrate to the Prophet (pbuh), their wives and children wanted to hinder them from doing so. Afterwards, they joined the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) and found that other Muslims had become more well-grounded in religion, so they resolved to punish their wives and children. Then, Allah revealed the *Ayah* in question."

We wonder how much integrity and prosperity man may have given up due to his wife and children. The

Messenger (pbuh) is reported to have said:

> "A child is a cause of cowardice and avarice."

Imam Ahmad has reported `Abdullah Ibn Buraidah to have said,

> "I heard my father say: 'While the Messenger (pbuh) was preaching to us, Al-Hassan and Al Hussein came along wearing red robes and moving with difficulty, he (pbuh) came down from his pulpit, carried them, and seated them in front of him. He then said: "Truthful are the words of Allah 'Verily, your property and children are but a trial". No sooner had I beheld these two young boys stumbling than I impatiently interrupted my speech and picked them up." Thus, he (pbuh) gave the *Ummah* a perfect example of mercy and kindness towards the young.

It is worth noting that persistence on patience in times of ease is much more difficult, for it is aligned with

man's control. Similarly, a hungry man bears hunger more easily in the absence of food than in its presence.

The second category mentioned above, which is not in compliance with man's desire, can be divided into three groups:

The first group is related to one's freedom of choice. It is comprised of performing deeds of obedience to Allah and shunning those of rebellion. Observing one's duty to Allah, Most High, needs to be done with patience, for man often resists performing extra acts of worship. In Prayers, for instance, laziness easily overtakes man, especially if his heart is hard and overcome by sins. This is the condition of the disobedient and negligent people. As a result, worship becomes difficult to perform. If this happens, worship is often carried out ceremoniously and ever absent-mindedly. When paying Zakah (poor-due), such a man may be overwhelmed with greed. The same applies to Hajj and Jihad.

Under such circumstances, patience must be main-

tained in three situations:

First: When starting an action, intentions must be purified, so as to contain sincere devotion. Ostentation must be avoided and the individual must have a strong and sincere resolve to perform the action properly.

Secondly: The work itself must be performed with patient perseverance. Man is required to ward off laxity and negligence, to reconsider his intentions whenever he starts a new work, and to keep his heart constantly full of Divine Remembrance.

It is not just a matter of mere performance, but rather a state of mind; remembering Him Who ordains all affairs. This is the nature of devoutly worshipping Allah. It includes man's patience to perform rituals properly both in letter and spirit, and to remember Allah always. There must be an incorporation of the physical and the spiritual, as man remains conscious of Allah.

Thirdly: To show patience after completing the action, as follows:

1- To constantly keep himself away from whatever invalidates his action. Allah says:

﴾ O ye who believe! Cancel not your charity by injury. ﴿

(Al-Baqarah: 264)

2- Boasting about good deeds must be shunned because this is more harmful than disobedience.

3- Likewise, to refrain from disclosing these acts; for this is also more harmful than disobedience.

A servant, who performs a deed secretly between himself and Allah, gets it written down in the Book of secrets. But when he discloses it, it is moved to the Book of publicity.

Accordingly, let man never think that the carpet of patience is folded merely by completing the work.

Giving up all aspects of rebellion means to cut off customary practices and entirely abandon their votaries, which substantially support man. Habit is a peculiar

character.

When desire is added to it, two soldiers of Satan are mobilized, which simple, everyday religious motivation fails to overcome.

The second group of circumstances in which man has no control over, such as death, theft, illness, etc. This is further divided into two types, namely; what is purely outside human power and what confronts him from his fellow-man, e.g., swears and insults.

Those elements which man has no control over contains four aspects:

A) Inability: Being unable to dispel such afflictions, man may be overtaken with anxiety, complaint and discontent.

B) Patience: Man maintains patience either for Allah's sake or merely for a common sense of honor.

C) Contentment: It is more sublime than patience itself.

However, scholars are in disagreement as to the

principle of its being obligatory.

D) Thanks-giving: It is better than contentment. The noble man considers affliction as bliss whose Giver is a Praiseworthy.

Concerning the situations that face man due to his fellows, there exists a further four elements, namely:

First: Forgiveness and tolerance.

Secondly: Having one's heart sincerely freed from satisfying his thirst for revenge, from its constant perusal of the crime and his being disturbed by it.

Thirdly: Fate, i.e. everything being Divinely ordained.

Fourthly: If wrong is done to man, he must turn with beneficence to the wrongdoer. This stand yields many untold benefits. Man will be satisfied with the vilest of people if he fails to inculcate this noble attitude.

The Third group: These actions which he willingly carries out.

Being fully controlled by desires, man neither has the choice nor the power to ward them off. Like love, which starts with choice, it ends up with a disease which man exposes himself to. When a man consumes alcohol, he cannot dispel it after taking it. It is at the beginning, that patience is required, but if man fails, he should therefore persevere constantly to its end, by trying to disobey the whispering of his desires. In this respect, Satan embarks on an amazing scheme. This is done by getting man to imagine that partaking of something forbidden may be necessary or at least permissible as a remedy. This is, however, nothing more than treating oneself with intoxication or impurity. Unfortunately, some legal jurists have made it lawful, which is incorrect.

Such a remedy does not, in fact, put an end to illness, but rather nurtures it. There are many that have applied it to their detriment, both in this world as well as the Hereafter! The effective treatment is that of patience and trust in Allah. Most High.

Allah says,

> ﴾ but if ye persevere patiently, and guard against evil,., then that indeed is a matter of great resolution. ﴿

(Al Imran: 186)

He also says,

> ﴾ Behold, he that is righteous and patient, never will Allah suffer the reward to be lost, of those who do right. ﴿

(Yusuf: 90)

Thus, patience and piety treat all the maladies of man's religion. Patience and piety initiate the existence of each other.

One may wonder that if man shows patience and tries to maintain it, will he receive its rewards even if he happened to be excessive disobedient? Will he be held accountable for its consequences even though they are beyond his control?

Concerning the former question, the answer is in the affirmative, provided that he sincerely repents and earnestly regrets pursuing the unlawful means. In that way, man is rewarded for his patient perseverance; for he strives against his evil inclinations.

This turns out to be a good deed,

> ﴾ Allah will never suffer the reward to be lost,
> of those who do right. ﴿
>
> (Yusuf: 90)

Regarding the punishment for its outcome, man is held punishable for both the unlawful means and their consequences, just as a drunkard is chastised for whatever he commits during intoxication. It is self-evident that "prohibition commands no justification." A man who encourages error or a heretic is held responsible for the burdens of those who follow his example. In that way, Adam's son, Cain, who killed his brother, Abel, shares the sins of all murderers until the Day of Judgement. Allah says,

﴾ That they may bear, on the Day of Judgement, their own burdens of those without knowledge, whom they misled. ﴿

(An-Nahl: 25)

He also says,

﴾ They will bear their own burdens, and (other) burdens along with their own, and on the Day of Judgement, they will be called to account for their falsehoods. ﴿

(Al-`Ankabut: 13)

One may further ask that how can we sincerely renounce such an outcome, when man gives up only what he knowingly commits? In such a case repentance stands for regret. Man is required to feel remorse for the action, forsake it and its motives, and completely keep himself away from it.

If the result of the action was related to another person, the man is entitled to remove it from him as far as

possible. Thus, in order to repent from such actions, a man, who supported a heretic, must proclaim his falsehood so that the truth is made known. This is the way of true guidance.

Allah says,

> ﴾ Those who conceal the clear (sings) that we have sent down, and the guidance, after we have made it clear for the people in the Book, on them shall be Allah's curse, and the curse of those entitled to curse-except those who repent and make amends and openly declare (the Truth); to them I turn; for I am Oft-Returning, Most Merciful. ﴿

(Al-Baqarah: 159-160)

Thus, repentance, making amends and openly declaring what they had previously denied are the conditions laid down by Allah for accepting anyone seeking to return to Him. Likewise, the hypocrites, who outwardly adopted Islam, but in reality were disbelievers, who supported the

Jews against the Prophet (pbuh) were demanded to make amends for their corruption. They were called on to seek refuge with Allah, rather than the infidels, and to worship Allah devoutly, rather than for ostentation and pretence. Such are the conditions of returning to Allah in repentance.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The Hardest Form of Patience

There are two factors that influence the degree of difficulty in patience. Firstly, is the degree of motivation when man wants to do something and secondly, how convenient is the intended action for man. If both factors exist, patience reaches it utmost difficulty and vice versa. While if one of the two factors disappears, it becomes difficult on one hand and considerably convenient on the other.

Thus, if man has no motive to kill, steal, drink wine, or commit atrocities, and these actions are inconvenient for him, then he is able to ward them off easily. Whereas a man whose desires are powerful and finds it convenient to act accordingly, then he hardly able to show constant perseverance. Hence, the ruler who abstains from injustice, the young man from indecency and the rich from worldly

pleasures, command the highest status before Allah."[1]

These categories rightly deserve Allah's protection on the Day of Judgement so long as they bear hardships patiently. Therefore, the adulterous old man, the untruthful ruler and the haughty poor are severely punished because it would be more convenient for them to overcome such unlawful desires. Consequently, giving up patience in such situations sheds light on their insolence and rebellion

---

(1) On the authority of Abu Hurairah, the Prophet (pbuh) said, "Seven are those whom Allah will place under His protection on a Day when there will be no protection but His, namely:

'The just ruler; the young man who is brought up in worship of His Lord; a man whose heart is constantly attached to Mosques; two men who love one another for Allah's sake, He alone brings them together and separates them; a man who, summoned by a beautiful woman, says: 'I fear Allah'; a man who gives charity so much secretly that his left hand does not know not what his right hand has given, and a man who, remembering Allah in seclusion, and then sheds tears."

against Allah.

It requires constant perseverance to keep away from sins of the tongue and unchastity because their motives are powerful and easily accessible. Unfortunately, sins of the tongue provide delight for man, such as slander, telling lies, dispute, direct or indirect self-complacency, reporting people's utterances, defaming enemies and praising his votaries. On the authority of Mu`adh Ibn Jabal (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (pbuh) said,

> "Keep control over your tongue." Mu`adh wondered, "Are we held accountable for our utterances?" The Messenger said, "People are thrown down on their noses in the Hell-fire only by the harvest of their tongues."

This is true especially when offences of the tongue turn into a habit, thus becoming almost impossible to overcome.

You may find a man who prays at night, fasts during the daytime and refrains from resting on a silky pillow even

for a single moment, but he likes to indulge in disparaging remarks about others. He may even cast aspersions about the righteous people who are sincere to Allah and their religion, without knowing exactly what he is speaking about.

Therefore, there are many who abstain from the slightest unlawful thing, even a drop of wine, but they cannot avoid adultery. `Abdullah Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both) was asked about the blood of the mosquito. He said: "Behold, these men ask me about the blood of the mosquito while they have killed the son of the Prophet's daughter (pbuh)."

Hardship in patience, in respect of sins and their varieties, differs according to the strength and weakness of what motivates them respectively.

Imam `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "Patience is of three categories, namely:

a) To bear adversity with perseverance,

b) To perform obedience with constancy, and

c) To ward off rebellion patiently."

A man who *endures an* adversity calmly until Allah gives him relief, will receives 300 good deeds as his reward. A man who performs acts of obedience as Divinely prescribed receives 600, while he who keeps way from rebellion receives 900.

Maimun Ibn Mahran (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "Patience is of two types, namely:

a) To bear adversity calmly which is commendable, and

b) To ward off disobedience is much better."

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Patience in the Qur`an

Imam Ahmad (may Allah bestow His mercy upon him) said: Allah has mentioned patience in the Qur`an in ninety instances.

We mention here some texts in where patience is dealt with as follows:

References to patience:

1- Patience is a Command:

Allah says,

﴿ But thou be patient, for thy patience is but with the Help of Allah ﴾

(An-Nahl: 127)

﴿ Now await in patience the command of the Lord. ﴾

(At-Tur: 48)

2- Shunning its opposite, i.e., impatience:

Allah says,

﴾ And be in no haste about the unbelievers.﴿ [1]

(Al-Ahqaf: 35)

﴾ So lose not heart; nor fall into despair. ﴿

(Al `Imran: 139).

﴾ And be not like the companion of the fish. ﴿[2]

(Al-Qalam: 48)

3- Prosperity depends on one's patience:

Allah says,

﴾ O ye who believe persevere in patience and constancy; vie in such perseverance;

---

[1] Prophet Muhammad is commanded not to be impatient either about the success of his mission or the punishment of those who oppose it. (Translator)

[2] This was Zu-nun or Jonah. He was sent to the people of Nineveh. (Translator)

strengthen each other; and fear Allah; that ye may prosper. ﴾

(Al 'Imran: 200)

Prosperity is dependant on patience, perseverance, constancy, self-restraint and refusing to be subjected.

4- The patient one's reward is twofold:

Allah says,

﴿ Twice they will be given their reward, for that they have persevered in patience. ﴾

(Al-Qasas: 54)

Sulaiman Ibn Al-Qasim said: Rewards of all acts are known except for patience that is because Allah says,

﴿ Those who patiently persevere will truly receive their reward with out measure.﴾

(Az-Zumar: 10)

5- Religious leadership is based on patience and certainty:

Allah says,

﴾ And we appointed, from among them, leaders, giving guidance under Our command, so long as they persevered with patience. ﴿

(As-Sajdah: 24)

6- Obtaining the company of Allah:

Allah says,

﴾ For Allah is with those who patiently persevere.﴿

(Al-Baqarah: 153)

Abu `Ali Ad-Daqqra said: Those who are patient are honored both in this world and the Hereafter, for Allah has granted them His providence.

7- The glad tidings of three things for them only:

Allah says,

﴿ But give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere, who says, when afflicted with calamity: 'To Allah we belong, and to Him is our return". They are those on whom (descend) blessings from their Lord, and mercy, and they are the ones that receive guidance. ﴾

(Al-Baqarah: 155-157)

An early Muslim was once consoled during affliction, he said: Why should not I keep patience while Allah has promised me three things, which is better than all the world.

8- Patience is assistance and equipment:

Allah says,

﴿ Nay seek (Allah's) Help with patient perseverance and prayer. ﴾ (Al-Baqarah: 45)

9- Patience and consciousness of Allah result in victory:

Allah says,

﴾ Yea, if ye remain firm, and act right, even if the enemy rush here on you in hot haste, your Lord would help you with five thousand angels clearly marked.﴿

(Al `Imran: 125)

It is reported by Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both) that the Prophet (pbuh) said, "Behold! Victory comes with patience."

10- Patience and consciousness of Allah are the most powerful shields against the enemy's plots.

Allah says,

﴾ But if ye are patient and do right, not the least harm will their cunning do to you. ﴿

(Al `Imran: 120)

11- The angels greet those who are patient in Paradise:

Allah says,

﴿ And angels shall enter unto them from every gate (will the salutation) "peace unto your for that ye preserved in patience. ﴾

(Ar-Ra`d: 23-24)

12- Allah has permitted them to apply equitable punishment for any wrong done to them, but He swore that patience is superior.

He says,

﴿ And if ye punish, let your punishment be proportionate to the wrong that has been done to you: but if ye show patience, that is indeed the best (course) for those who are patient.﴾

(An-Nahl: 126)

13- Forgiveness and great reward are determined by patience and good deeds:

Allah says,

﴾ So do those who show patience and constancy, and work righteousness: for them is forgiveness (of sins) and a great reward. ﴿

(Hud: 11)

Thus, those who show patience are excluded from the blameworthy people who fall into despair and ingratitude when experiencing affliction; and if favors touch them, they fall into exultation and pride.

14- Patient forbearance during adversities requires firm resolution:

Allah says,

﴾ But indeed if any show patience and forgives, that would truly be an affair of great resolution. ﴿ (Ash-Shura: 43)

He also says,

﴿ Enjoin what is just, and forbid what is wrong, and bear with patient constancy whatever betide thee; for this is firmness (of purpose) in (the conduct of) affairs.﴾

(Luqman: 17)

15- Allah has promised the patient believers victory:

Allah says,

﴿ The fair promise of thy Lord was fulfilled for the children of Israel, because they had patience and constancy. ﴾

(Al-A`raf: 137)

16- Allah loves only those who are steadfast in patience:

Allah says,

﴿ How many of the prophets fought (in Allah's way), and with them (fought) large bands of

godly men? But they never lost heart if they met with disaster in Allah's way, nor did they weaken (in will) nor give in. And Allah loves those who are firm and steadfast in patience. ﴿

(Al `Imran: 146)

17- Twice in the Qur`an, Allah has favored only those who show patience, with the traits of righteousness:

First, in the part of Qur`an which says,

﴾ Those who had been granted true knowledge said: Alas for you! The reward of Allah (in the Hereafter) is best for those who believe and work righteousness: but this none shall attain, save those who steadfastly persevere in good patience. ﴿

(Al-Qasas: 80)

Second, in Surat Ha-Mim or Fussilat, where man is commanded to "repel evil with what is better:

﴾ Then will he, between whom and thee was hatred become as it were thy friend and intimate. And no one will be granted such goodness except those who exercise patience and self-restraint, one but the persons of the greatest good fortune. ﴿

(Fussilat: 34-35)

18- Only those who show patience and are grateful for Allah's bounties and favors derive benefit and take heed of Allah's signs:

Allah says,

﴾ We sent Moses with Our signs (and the command:) 'bring out thy people from the depths of darkness into light, and remind them of the Days of Allah.' Verily in this there are signs for those who are firmly patient and constant, grateful and appreciative.﴿

(Ibrahim: 5)

He also says,

﴾ Verily in this are signs for all who constantly persevere and give thanks. ﴿

(Luqman: 31), (Saba`: 19) and (Ash-Shura: 33)

19- Allah has highly praised His servant Job for his patient forbearance:

Allah says,

﴾ Truly we found him full of patience and constancy. How excellent is the servant ever did he return (to Us). ﴿

(Sad: 44)

Job is referred to here as "An excellent servant" due to his patience; otherwise he would have been "An Evil servant."

20- The unbelievers, as well as impatient persons, are doomed to utter loss:

Allah says,

﴾ By the time[1], verily, Man is in loss, except such as have faith, and do righteous deeds, and (join together) in the mutual enjoining of Truth, and of patience and constancy. ﴿

(Al-`Asr: 1-3)

Ash-Shafi` said: If the whole of mankind thought over these *Ayat,* they would find room for themselves therein. Man's integrity is obtained only through knowledge and patience. In fact, as man yearns for self-perfection, he also needs to perfect his fellow man. This springs from enjoining truth and observing patient perseverance.

---

[1] `Asr may mean time through the ages or long periods, the late afternoon from which the `Asr obligatory prayer takes its name. (Translator).

21- Allah has singled out "The companions of the Right Hand"[1] as those who enjoin patience and treat people in gentle manners:

Allah says,

﴾ Then will he be of those who believe, and enjoin patience, (constancy and self-restraint), and enjoin deeds of kindness and compassion. Such are the companions of the Right Hand.﴿

(Al-Balad: 17-19)

The companions of the Right Hand are confined to those who possess such traits. Compared to them, we find people come under four categories, of which they are the best categories. The other vile ones are.

2- Those who are neither patient nor kind.

3- Those who are patient but merciless.

---

(1) The companions of the Right Hand are denoted as those who receive their book in the Hereafter with their right hands, and, thus, achieve salvation. (Translator).

4-Those who show love and compassion, but are rather impatient.

22- Allah has enjoined patience along with the pilllars of Islam including all aspects of faith, e.g., with prayer:

Allah says,

﴾ Nay, seek (Allah's help with patient perseverance and prayer. ﴿

(Al-Baqarah: 45)

With piety and consciousness of Allah: Allah says,

﴾ Behold, that is righteous and patient. ﴿

(Yusuf: 90)

With Righteous deeds in general: Allah says,

﴾ No so do those who show patience and constancy, and work righteousness. ﴿

(Hud: 11)

With thanks-giving: Allah says,

﴾ Verily in this there are signs for such as are firmly patient and constant, grateful and appreciative. ﴿

(Ibrahim: 5)

With mercy: Allah says,

﴾ And enjoin patience (constancy and self-restraint), and enjoin deeds of kindness and compassion. ﴿

(Al-B alad: 17)

With truth: Allah says,

﴾ And (join together) in the mutual enjoining of truth, and of patience and constancy. ﴿

(A1- `Asr: 3)

With certitude and faith: Allah says,

﴾ So long as they persevered with patience and continued to have faith in our signs. ﴿

(As-Sajdah: 24)

With veracity and truthfulness: Allah says,

﴾ For true men and true women, for men and women who are patient and constant. ﴿

(Al-Ahzab: 35)

In short, Allah has made patience the means for obtaining His love, company, providence, victory, help and great rewards.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Patience in the Sunnah [1]

Al-B ukhari and Muslim narrated that Anas Ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) said that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) passed by a woman who was crying for her deceased boy. He said to her:

> "Fear Allah and be patient." She said: "Why do you care for my calamity?" Then, when he went away, someone said to her that he was the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). She was shocked and went to him. When she arrived, she did not find any guards at his door. She said: "O Messenger of Allah, I did not know you." He said: "Patience is at the first shock." [2]

(1) The following Hadiths are not all the Hadiths reported about patience in the Sunnah. We have only selected a number of them, especially there are a number of the Hadiths of this chapter mentioned elsewhere in the book.(Translator).

(2) Transmitted by Al-Bukhari (1283) and Muslim (626).

His saying

"Patience is at the first shock."

Is like his saying,

"The strong one is not the one who wins in wrestling but he is the one who controls himself when being enraged." [1]

The surprise of calamity has a fright that shakes the heart. So, if the one is patient at the first shock, it will become weak. The first shock is the unexpected calamity that comes to the heart and annoys it. But if it comes after the heart is getting used to it and knows that it must happen, then, patience will be like a pressing necessity. So, when the woman knew that her crying was useless went to apologize to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) as if she was saying that she was patient but the Messenger (pbuh) told her that patience is at the first shock.

[1] Transmitted by Al-Bukhari (6114) and Muslim (2609).

What he meant by that was reiterated by Sa`id Ibn Zarby about Muhammad Ibn Serin that Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: (The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) passed by a woman who was crouching and crying at a grave. He said to her:

> "O Bondmaid of Allah! Fear Allah and be patient." She said: "O Servant of Allah! I bereaved." He said: "O Bondmaid of Allah! Fear Allah and be patient." She said: "O Servant of Allah! If you had a calamity, you would excuse me." He said: "O Bondmaid of Allah! Fear Allah and be patient." She said:
>
> "O Servant of Allah! I have heard you, so go away." Then, the Messenger of Allah went away. A man from his Companions said to the woman: "What did that man say to you?" She said: "He said to me so and so and I answered him with so and so." He asked her:
>
> "Do you know him?" She said: "No." He said:

"He is the Messenger of Allah (pbuh)." Then, she ran after the Messenger and when she reached him, she said: "O Messenger of Allah! I am patient! I am patient! He said:

"Patience is at the first shock. Patience is at the first shock." (1)

There are different aspects of knowledge in this Hadith. The first one is that patience is necessary in the face of calamities. Allah commands it to His servants. The second one is enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong. The third one is to continue forbidding the wrong until the man returns to Allah.

The fourth aspect is that some scholars took this Hadith as proof for allowing women to visit graves. They said that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) did not prohibit the woman from visiting the grave but he ordered her to be patient. Therefore, if her visit were forbidden, he would surely tell her. This opinion was refuted by saying that

(1) Narrated by Abu Ya`la and Al-Bazar, Majma' Az-Zwa`id (3/2).

when the Prophet (pbuh) ordered the woman to fear Allah and to be patient, it was an indication that he denied her action. This is also indicated by the fact that when the woman knew that the man who had talked to her was the one whom she should obey, she left quickly. Additionally, the Prophet's curse to women who visit graves and people who build mosques on them took place later during his death illness.

In extension, when the Messenger did not let her know who he was, while she was in that state, he meant to consider for her grief. This is because if she knew, she would not listen to him. Moreover, her disobedience to him, while she did not know him, was better than if she knew him.

In *Sahih* Muslim, Umm Salamah said: "I heard the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) saying:

"Whenever a Muslim who has a calamity and says what Allah ordered him to say, (namely) "To Allah we my in my calamity and give me

what is better than it."

Allah certainly gives him what is better than it" Then Allah will give him what is better than it." She said: "When Abu Salamah died, I said: "Who is among Muslims better than Abu Salamah whose house was the first to immigrate to the Prophet (pbuh)." Then I said them (i.e. the words mentioned above) and Allah gave me His Messenger. The Messenger of Allah sent to me Hatib Ibn Abi Balta`ah to ask me to marry him. I said that I had a daughter and I am a jealous woman. The Messenger of Allah said: "As for her daughter, I ask Allah (for her) not to be in need of her (mother) and I ask Allah to take (her) jealousy away." Then, I married the Messenger of Allah (pbuh)" [1]

---

[1] Sahih Muslim (918).

Abu Dawud's narration of the same Hadith cited that Umm Salamah said: "The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said:

> "If anyone of you has a calamity, he should say: "To Allah we belong and to Him is our return. O Allah! O Allah! I wish for that You reward me for my calamity. So, reward me for it and give me what is better than it." (1)

When Abu Salamah was dying he said: "O Allah! Give my family who is better than me." When he died, Umm Salamh said: "To Allah we belong and to Him is our return. O Allah! I wish that You reward me for my calamity." Contemplate! how the reward of her patience, following the Messenger and being satisfied with Allah was her marriage to the best of creatures!

Abu Musa Al-Ash`ari reported that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said:

> "When a son of a servant of Allah dies, Allah

(1) Sunnan Abu Dawud (3119)

says to the Angels: "Have you taken the son of My servant?" They say: "Yes." Then Allah says: "Have you taken the fruit of his heart?"

They say: "Yes." Allah say: "What has My servant said?" They say: "He has praised You and said, "To Allah we belong and to Him is our return." Then, Allah says: "Build a house for My servant in Paradise and call it the house of praise." (1)

Anas reported that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said: "Allah says (in a *Qudsi Hadith):*

" If I test My servant with his two beloved (organs) and then he holds patience, I will compensate him for them with Paradise He meant his eyes." (2)

---

(1) Sunnan At-Tirmidhi , Musnad Ahmad *(4/415)* and Ibn Hibban (726)

(2) Transmitted by Al-Bukhari *(5653)*

Abu Hurayrah reported that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said:

Allah (Glorified and Exalted be he) says:

" There is no reward but Paradise for My believing servant, when I take the soul of his chosen fellow from the people of the world and then he holds patience (wishing for its reward)." [1]

`Ata` Ibn Abi Rabah said: "Ibn `Abbas said to me:

"Do you want to see a woman from the people of Paradise?" I said: "Yes." He said: "This black woman came to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) and said: "O Messenger of Allah! I am epileptic and when it happens, I become uncovered. So, invoke Allah for me." The Prophet said: *"If* you wish you can be patient and you will enter Paradise and if you wish I

[1] Transmitted By Al-Bukhari (6424).

will invoke Allah to cure you.' She said: "I will be patient." Then she said:

"But I become uncovered, so, invoke Allah for me not to become uncovered." Then, he invoked Allah for her." [1]

`Ata` Ibn Yasar reported the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) to have said:

"When a servant of Allah becomes ill, two Angeles descend to him. Allah says: "Look what will he say to his visitors?" If he, when they come to him, praises Allah they raise this to Allah and He knows better. Then, Allah says: "If My servant dies, he deserves that I enter him into Paradise and if I cure him, he deserves that I exchange his flesh with a better flesh and his blood with a better blood, and that I expiate his sins." [2]

[1] Transmitted by Al-Bukhari *(5652)* and Muslim *(2576)*.
[2] Al-Muwatta` (2/940).

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) is reported to have divided money and some people said:

> "This division is not as what is ordered by Allah." When the Messenger was told about that he said: "O Allah! Bless Moses. He was afflicted with more than this and he was patient. [1]

Al-Zuhary said that `Urwa narrated that `A`ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: "The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said:

> "Whenever a catastrophe happens to a Muslim, Allah will expiate his sins by it, even if a thorn pricks him." [2]

`A`ishah said: "The Prophet (pbuh) said:

> "Whenever a thorn pricks a believer, Allah will raise him a grade and decrease one of his sins by it." [3]

---

(1) Transmitted by Al-Bukhari (6059) Muslim (1062) on the authority of Ibn Mas`ud.

(2) Transmitted by Al-Bukhari (5640) and Muslim (2572).

(3) Transmitted by Muslim *(2572)*.

'Abdullah Ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

> "I entered to the Prophet (pbuh) and he was very sick. I said: "O Messenger of Allah! You are very sick." He said: "Yes, my sickness is like the sickness of two men of you." I said: "So, you have two rewards." He said:
>
> "Yes. By Him in Whose hands is my soul, whenever a Muslim on the earth is afflicted with harm because of sickness or anything lower, Allah drops his sins by it, just as the tree drops its leaves." [1]

`A`ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: "I have never seen pain severer than that of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh)" [2]

---

[1] Transmitted by Al-Bukhari *(5648)* and Muslim (2571).
[2] Al-Bukhari (5646) ad Muslim (2570).

Khubab Ibn al-Arat said:

> "I went to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) while he was lying in the shade of the Ka`bah, and we had just been oppressed by disbelievers. We said to him: "May you invoke Allah?" Then, he sat and his face was red and said: "Men (in the past) were combed by combs of iron in between his flesh and bones, but this did not cause him to leave his religion." [1]

Ibn Abbas said: "A daughter of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) was dying while she was young. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) took her and embraced her, and then, he put his hand over her. Thereupon, Umm Ayman started weeping. I said to her.

> "Are you crying and the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) in your house?" She said: "How can I not weep while the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) is weeping." The Messenger said: "I

[1] Al-Bukhari (3852)..

> am not weeping, but it is mercy." Then he said: "It is good for the believer whenever his soul is pulled out from between his sides while he is praising Allah, Glorified and Exalted be he."[1]

Yahia Ibn Waththab said that one of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said: "The believer who associates with people and is patient when they harm him has greater reward than the one who does not associate with people and is not patient when they harm him." [2]

Abu Sa`id Al-Khudri (may Allah be pleased with him) said that the Prophet (pbuh) said:

> "There is no gift better and wider than patience." [3]

---

(1) Sunan An-Nasa'i (4/12).
(2) At-Tirmidhi (2507), Ibn Majah (4032) and Ahmad (2/43).
(3) Al-Bukhari (1469) and Muslim (1053).

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said:

> "When Allah loves a folk, He tests them. Whoever (among them) is satisfied will have satisfaction and whoever is dissatisfied will have dissatisfaction." [1]

Jabir Ibn `Abdillah (may Allah be pleased with him) said that the Messenger of Allah entered to a woman and said:

> "Why are you trembling?" She said: "It is fever, may Allah not bless it." He said: "Do not abuse fever. It takes away the sins of the sons of Adam, just as furnace takes the badness away from iron." [2]

Abu Sa`id Al Khudri (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

> "I entered upon the Prophet (pbuh) when he

---

[1] At-Tirmidhi (2396) and Ibn Majah (4031)
[2] Muslim *(2575)*.

had a fever. I put my hand over the velvet and I felt the heat of fever. I said: "What a strong fever you have O Messenger of Allah!" He said: "We, the Prophets, our pain is doubled and this doubles our reward." I said:

"O Messenger of Allah! Who receives the severest tests among people?" He said: "Prophets." I said: "Who is next?" He said: "Righteous people. (In the past, righteous) men were tested with poverty, that they found nothing but cleft and sleeveless garments to wear. And they were tested with lice, that lice killed them. (Though,) they liked this more than you like gifts." (1)

Abu Sa`id reported that a man said:

"O Messenger of Allah! What do you think causing these diseases from which we

(1) Musnad Ahmad (3/94) and Ibn Majah (4024).

suffer?" He said: "(They are) expiations." [1]

`Ubay Ibn Ka`b said: "O Messenger of Allah! Even if they are few?"

Abi Umamah Al Bahely said that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said:

"Allah tests you, although He knows best about your affair, by affliction just as you test your gold by fire. Some of you come out like pure gold and these are whom Allah saves from their sins. Others come out like gold but lower than these and these are those who doubt for somewhat, and others will come out like the black gold and these are those who subject to *Fitnah* (seduction, persecution and the like)." [2]

---

(1) Narrated by Ahniad (3\23) and others.

(2) Transmitted by Tabrani in "Al Kabir."

Abu Hurayrah said that when he went to visit a sick man, the latter said to him that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said:

"Allah, Glorified and Exalted be He, says:

"This is my fire, which I empower over My believing servant in the world to be (instead of) his share of the Fire in the Hereafter." [1]

It was related that Anas Ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

"The Messenger of Allah stopped at a tree and shook it until what Allah wished of its leaves to fall, fell down. He said: "Catastrophes and pains in causing the sins of my nation to fall are faster than me in the leaves of this tree to fall." [2]

---

[1] Transmitted by At-Tirmidhi (2088) and Ibn Majah (3470).

[2] Al Mundhiri in "Al Targhib (4/149) and others).

The Prophet (pbuh) said:

"The invocation of the patient is accepted until he becomes well." (1)

It was mentioned that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said:

"Whenever a vein causes pain to a believer, Allah writes for him because of it a good deed and removes a bad one and raise him one grade." (2)

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said:

"By Him in Whose hands is my soul, everything Allah ordains in the fate of a believer always brings him good. If he has something good, he shows gratitude; and this is good for him. If he has something bad, he holds patience; and this is good for him. This is never to be but for believers." (3)

---

(1) Al Mundhiri in "Al Targhib" (4/164).

(2) Transmitted by al Hakim in Al Mustadrak. (1/347) and others.)

(3) Ahmad *(6/15)* and others.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Patience as Observed by the Companions and Their Successors

Imam Ahmad reported that As-Safar said that once Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) fell ill. When people went to visit him, they asked if he needed a doctor. Abu Bakr told them that a doctor had already examined him. They asked again about what the doctor said to him. Abu Bakr said that He said: "I am the Highest Performer of whatsoever I will." [1]

Imam Ahmad also reported that Mujahid said that `Umar Ibnul-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "We ever obtained the best of life by virtue of patience.

`Umar also said: "We ever reached the highest degree of living by virtue of patience. If patience were to be a man, he would be generous indeed!"

(1) Abu Bakr used the term, "doctor" for Allah the Almighty. (Translator)

`Ali Ibn Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) said: the position of patience in regards to belief is like the position of the head in regards to the body. When the head is cut off, the body is of no value." Then `Ali raised his voice as saying: "There is no belief in whosoever has no patience." He said also: "Patience is a mount that never stumbles."

Al-Hasan said: "Patience is a treasure of good that Allah bestows only on honored servants in His Providence."

`Umar Ibn `Abdil-`Aziz said: "Whenever Allah provides one of His servants with bounty and then takes it away from him and gives him patience instead, surely the compensation (i.e. patience) is better than the bounty which has been taken away."

Maymun Ibn Mahran said: "Patience is the best thing that man can ever receive as it is the seal of good."

Sulayman Ibnul-Qasim said: "The reward for any deed can be known except the reward for patience, for Allah the Almighty says:

> ﴿ Those who patiently persevere that will truly receive a reward without measure! ﴾
>
> (Az-Zumar: 10)

Ibnul-Qasim said: "It is like the water pouring forth."

Once a deeply pious man had a piece of material that he used to look at from time to time. On it were written the Divine Words:

> ﴿ Now await in patience the command of thy Lord: for verily thou art in Our eyes. ﴾
>
> (At-Tur: 48)

'Umar Ibnul-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "If patience and gratitude were to be in the shape of camels, I would not care which of them I should mount."

Whenever he met a tribulation, Muhammad Ibn Shabramah used to say: "This is just a summery cloud that would soon fade away."

Commenting on the Divine Words,

> ﴾ And We appointed, from among them, Leaders, giving guidance under Our command, so long as they persevered with patience. ﴿

(As-Sajdah: 24)

Sufiyan Ibn `Uiaynah said: It means that when they held on Jihad, which is a requisite of those who have patience, Allah appointed them as leaders."

When someone asked Al-Ahnaf Ibn Qays about forbearance, he answered: "Forbearance is to persevere patiently when you face something detestable."

Wahb said: "Wisdom dictates that the result of fondness is fatigue, the result of forbearance is comfort, and the result of patience is success."

Once `Urwah Ibnuz-Zubayr came to Al-Walid Ibn `Abdul-Malik, accompanying his son Muhammad, who was very good-looking. Muhammad came to Al-Walid in colored dress, plaited hair, and obviously self-confident. Seeing him in that form, Al-Walid said:

"This is how the Qurayshite Youth should be."

Thus Al-Walid envied Muhammad so much so that the latter went out feeling dizzy and fell down in a stable of animals that kept footing on him until he died. Moreover, an irritation attacked `Urwah's leg. Al-Walid sent doctors to examine him. They said that they had to amputate the leg otherwise the irritation would creep into the rest of the body.

Al-Walid was determined to cut it off. They did so by using a saw. When the saw reached the shinbone, `Urwah fainted. When he awoke, sweat was covering his face. He then

said: "Allah is the Greatest. There is no god but Allah." He repeated this while holding his amputated leg. He kissed it and added: "I swear by Him Who has borne me upon you, that He knows I have never walked on you to do something prohibited or sinful, or to do anything that Allah dislikes." Then he proposed that it should be washed and perfumed, and he shrouded it in a velvet cloth after which he sent it to be buried in the Muslims burial ground. When he left Al-Walid to go to Al-Madinah, his household and friends received him with consolation, but he repeated the Qur`anic words: "Truly we have suffered much fatigue at this (stage of) our journey." And he said nothing more in this regard. A little later, he said: "I will not enter Al-Madinah, since I expect to receive only those who will gloat over my grief or those who are envious. Hence, he went to a

palace in Al-`Aqiq and stayed there. Interestingly enough, When `Urwah entered his palace `Isa Ibn Tarhah said to him:

May the fathers of those who hate you perish! Show me the cause of your calamity." `Urwah uncovered his knee: thereupon `Isa said to him: "By Allah, we never intended to prepare you to fight. Here Allah has saved most of your body: your brain, eyes, hands and the other leg." `Urwah commented: "O `Isa! No one consoled me in the way you have done." Another noteworthy situation was that doctors said to `Urwah when they were about to amputate his leg, "May we let you drink some drug to kill the pain?" But he said: "He (i.e. Allah) is testing me to see how patient I will be; so should I contradict His will!" In this context some people asked `Urwah's son, Hisham about what his father used to do with his amputated leg when performing ablution. Hisham said that his father used to rub it with water.

Imam Ahmad said: `Abdus-Samad reported that Salam said he heard Qatadah as saying: "A man asked Luqman about the best of things, and he said: "Patience that is followed by no harm." Again the man asked him about the best of people. Luqman answered: "Who is satisfied with what Allah has given him." The man asked him about the most knowing amongst people, and Luqman said: "Who takes out of people's knowledge to add to his." He was also asked about what is better: to hoard property or to pursue knowledge? Luqman said: it is natural that you find good with the believer who has knowledge whenever you need it, but in case he does not have something to give, he does not give what he does not possess; and it is sufficient for him"

Commenting on the Divine Words, ﴿ (For me) patience is most fitting.﴾ (Yusof: 18, 83) Hassan Ibn Abi Jabalah said: "The most fitting patience is that which involves no complaining. Ibn Abid-Dunya also traced this saying to the Prophet (pbhuh).

Mujahid commented on the same Words by saying, "It is that which involves no panic", but `Amr Ibn Qays said, "It means submitting and consenting to the tribulation." Additionally, one of the Early Muslims said that the most fitting patience is that which involves no complaining."

Hammam reported that Qatadah commented on the Qur`anic Words,

﴾ And his eyes became white with sorrow, and
he was suppressed with silent sorrow. ﴿

(Yusuf: 84)

by saying: "He was suppressed with sorrow but said nothing but good speech."

In the same connection, Yahya Ibnul-Mukhtar reported that Al-Hasan said: "Being suppressed here means that he persevered patiently." But Hammam reported that Qatadah said it means that he hid his sorrow in his heart.

Al-Hasan said: "From amongst the reactions to bereavement, Allah likes the most that His servant faces a sorrowful and painful calamity patiently and fairly, as well as the reaction of the servant who forbears when being enraged."

`Abdullah Ibnul-Mubarak reported that Sa`id Ibn Jubayr said: "Patience is to confess that what has hurt you is mainly decided by Allah, and to wait (and wish) that Allah rewards you, and, you may find a man in panic but he forbears, so that you only see him patient."

Ibn Jubayr's Words, (to confess that what has hurt you is mainly decided by Allah) seem as if they interpret the Divine Words, ﴾ To Allah we belong ﴿ (AlBagarah: 156), that man confesses that he belongs to Allah; thus He does to him whatever He wants. And his words, "To which that Allah rewards you" seem to interpret the Divine Words, "And to Him is our return", meaning that we will return to Him, and He will reward us for our patience; thus the reward is never lost. As for Ibn Jubayr's last words,

"You may find a man in panic but he forbears", means that patience is not to be obtained by forbearance, but it is primarily to prevent the heart from being dissatisfied with the predestined harm, and to prevent the tongue from complaining. Therefore, whoever forbears but his heart is dissatisfied with his destiny is not one of the patient.

Yunus Ibn Yazid said: "I asked Rabi`ah Ibn Abi `Abdur-Rahma: "What is the highest degree of patience?" He said: "It is that one behaves on the day of bereavement the same as he did on the day before it."

Commenting on the Verse:

﴿ Therefore do thou hold patience, a Patience of beautiful (contentment). ﴾

(Al-Ma' arij: 5),

Qays Ibnul-Hajjaj said, It means that no one knows who the one in bereavment is."

When consoling someone, Shamar used to say: "Endure patiently under the Judgment of your Lord."

`Uqayl reported that he saw Salim Ibn `Abdillah Ibn `Umar in the funeral of Waqid Ibn `Abdillah Ibn `Umar wearing a wrap and holding a whip, by which he lashed every woman screaming that he could reach.

Muhammad Ibn Ja`far Jbn Mahran said: "Abdullah Ibn Muhammad Ibn Isma`il At-Tiyami told him that a man consoled another over his son's death saying: "Allah surely fulfills His promise for the one who holds patience properly. So, do not add the loss of the reward to your bereavement. No doubt, to lose the reward for patience is greater and more disastrous than the calamity itself."

Ibn Abis-Sammak consoled a man saying: "Hold steadfast to patience, for it is the deed held by those who expect the reward from Allah, and it is also the only refuge for the impatient."

`Umar Ibn `Abdil-`Aziz said: "Contentment is a degree that is difficult to reach, so Allah made patience to be counted as bringing good consequences (though it is bitter)." When a son of `Abdul-Malik's died, his father

performed the funeral prayer over the dead body then he said: "May Allah have mercy on you! You certainly were a minister and a supporter to me." `Umar added:

> "His eyes projected no tears, while people kept crying." When Mutraf Ibn `Abdillah lost one of his sons, people came to console him. He went out for them with a face full of joy, then he said: "I really feel shy of Allah to tremble before a calamity."

`Amr Ibn Dinar reported that `Ubayd Ibn `Umayr said: "Impatience does not mean that the eye should shed tears or the heart grieve, it is however expressed in bad words and evil thoughts."

Ibn Abid-Duniay reported that Al-Husayn Ibn `Abdil-`Aziz Al-Harwazi said: "When a son of mine died after his delivery, I said to his mother: "Be conscious of Allah, hope for His reward, and hold patience." She said: "My bereavment is so strenuous that I could not increase it with impatience."

Ibn Abid-Duniay also reported that `Umar Ibn Bakir said: "An old Qurayshite man said: "When Al-Hasan Ibn Al-Husayn, the father of `Ubaydullah Ibn Al-Hasan died, his son, `Ubaydullah, was the commander and judge of Al-Basrah. So, many people came to console him. They argued about what reveals man's impatience, and concluded that it is considered to be a token of impatience that man interrupts anything he used to do (before the calamity)."

Khalid Ibn Abi `Uthman Al-Qurashi said: "When Sa`id Ibn Jubayr came to console me for the death of my son, he saw me covering my head and wandering up and down in the house. He took the cover off and said: "Surrender (to grief) is a sign of impatience."

Many of our jurists and others hold that there is no problem if the bereaved person covers his head with a particular cover indicating his bereavment in order to make it easy for people to recognize that he is bereaved and console him, for consolation is a Sunnah. This opinion

however is not unanimously agreed upon. Our Sheikh rejected it, and there is no doubt that the Early Muslims did nothing like this, nor was it reported that one of the Companions or their successors did so. In fact, all traditions reported, explicitly reject it. In addition, Is-haq Ibn Rahawayh denied that the bereaved person should desert what he used to wear before the calamity, and said it is a sign of impatience.

Generally, they were accustomed not to change any of their normal clothes, nor did they desert their work, as all of this contradicts the sense of patience. It is no doubt that Allah (Glory be to Him) knows best.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Reactions to Bereavement

Weeping over or for the dead: Ahmad and Abu Hanifah considered weeping over or for the dead permissible before and after death. Abu Is-haq Ash-Shirazi had the same opinion, whereas Ash-Shafi`i and many of his companions disliked weeping after death, and preferred it to be at the time before the soul has left the body. As evidence, they quoted the Hadith narrated on the authority of Jabir Ibn `Atik,that when the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) went to visit `Abdullah Ibn Thabit, he found that he had become disabled. Then the Prophet (pbuh) called out to him but he did not answer. Thereupon the Prophet (pbuh) said: "To Allah we belong, and to Him is our return." Then he said: "O AburRabi`! [1] (Your death is about to)

---

[1] Transmitted by Abu Dawud (2774) At-Tirmidhi (1578), and Ibn Majah.(1394) on the authority of Abu Bakrah. At-Tirmidhi said it is a Hasan Gharib Hadith.
You may refer to Musnad Ahmad (1/191) and Sunan Abu Dawud *(2775)* for more Hadiths on this point. (Translator)

overcome us." (Having heard this), women wept. Ibn `Atik tried to keep them silent, but the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Let them (weep), but when it comes, let no woman weep." They asked: "O Messenger of Allah! What is it (that will come)?" He said: "Death." [1]

In Sahih Muslim and Shih Al-Bukhari, it is reported on the authority of Ibn `Umar that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said:

"Verity, the dead person is tormented by the weeping of his people over him." [2]

This obviously applies for weeping after death, for the person is not to be called "dead" before death.

Ibn `Umar narrated that when the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) came back from the battle of Uhud, he heard the women of Banu `Abdil-Ashhal weeping for their dead. Then he said: "But there is no one weeping for Hamzah." (the Prophet's uncle) Women from Al-Ansar came and

---

(1) Abu Dawud (311), and An-Nasa'i (4/13).)
(2) Al-Al-Bukhari (1286), and Muslim (928).

wept for Hamzah at the Prophet's house, to the extent that they awoke him. Thereupon he said:

> "Woe be to them, have they come to weep here until this moment! Order them to go back, and let them not weep for any dead person from now on." [(1)]

This Hadith explicitly abrogates the permissibility mentioned above.

The difference between weeping before death and weeping after it, is that people wish for more time for the dying person, so weeping then may convey their intention. But when he dies, hope is of no use; weeping does not change anything.

The jurists who allowed weeping in general reported that Jabir Ibn `Abdillah said: "In the battle of Uhud, my father was fatally injured. I wept for him, but people tried to prevent me, while the Prophet (pbuh) did not. My aunt,

---

(1) Musnad Ahmad (2/84), and Ibn Majah *(1541)*

Fatimah, started weeping too. Thereupon the Prophet (pbuh) said:

> "Whether you (Fatimah) wept or not, the Angels kept overshadowing him with their wings until they raised him up (i.e. to the heavens)." (1)

Al-Al-Bukhari and Muslim also narrated that Ibn `Umar said: "Sa`d Ibn `Ubadah fell ill. So the Prophet (pbuh) went to visit him accompanied by `AbdurRahman Ibn `Awf, Sa`d Ibn Abi Waqqas and `Abdullah Ibn Mas`ud. When the Prophet entered to see him, he found him unconscious, then he asked: "Is he dead"? They said, No, O Messenger of Allah." The Prophet started weeping. When they saw that, they started weeping too. Thereupon the Prophet said:

> "Should you not listen? Certainly, Allah does not torment because of weeping or grieving; He however torments or pities because of this

(1) Al-Al-Bukhari (1244), and Muslim (2472).

(and pointed to his own tongue)". [1]

Also, they quoted a part of the *Hadith* narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim on the authority of Usamah Ibn Zayd. It reads: "When a son of one of the Prophet's daughters was dying, he quickly went to her. When he raised the boy up, he found his soul rattling, so that the Prophet's eyes streamed with tears. (Having observed his weeping), Sa`d said: "O Messenger of Allah! What is this?" The Prophet said: "This is (out of) mercy that Allah puts in the hearts of His servants. Surely, Allah bestows His mercy on His merciful servants. [2]

In addition, this is a part of a *Hadith* narrated in Musnad Ahmad on the authority of Ibn `Abbas. It reads: "When Ruqayyah, the daughter of the Prophet died, women started weeping over her. `Umar lashed them with his whip, but the Prophet (pbuh) said:

"O `Umar! Let them weep, but let none of you

---

(1) Al-Bukhari (1304), and Muslim (924)
(2) As mentioned before.

croak like the Devil." Then he said:

> "Whatever the eye or the heart may produce is from Allah and out of mercy, but whatever the hand or the tongue may produce is from the Devil." (1)

Also in Musnad Ahmad, `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) reported that "When Sa'd Ibn Mu`adh died, the Prophet (pbuh), Abu Bakr and `Umar were there. She said: "By Him in whose hand my soul is, I recognized Abu Bakr's weeping from that of `Umar from my room."(2)

Also in the *Musnad,* Abu Hurayrah reported: "A funeral procession passed by the Prophet (pbuh), and I and `Umar Ibnul-Khattab were with him. Women were weeping, and when `Umar scolded them, the Prophet (pbuh) said:

> "O Ibnul-Khattab! Let them (weep), for the soul is grieved, the eyes are full of tears, and

(1) Musnad Ahniad (1/237, 238, *335).*
(2) Musnad Ahniad (6/142).

the event (i.e. death) is so close." [1]

In Jami` At-At-Tirmidhi, Jabir Ibn `Abdil1ah reported: "The Prophet (pbuh) took `Abdur-Rahman Ibn `Awf and went quickly to see the latter's son, Ibraheem. They found him dying. Then the Prophet (pbuh) took the boy, put him on his lap, and started weeping `Abdur-Rahman said: "Are you weeping?" Did you not forbid weeping?" The Prophet said:

> "No, but I forbade two foolish and wicked voices, one of which is the voice at (the time of) bereavement, scratches the face and cleaves the (outer) garment, and the other is the croaking of the Devil." [2]

---

(1) Musnad Ahmad (2/110), An-Nasa'i (4/19), and Ibn Majah (1587).

(2) Sunan At-At-Tirmidhi (1005.) At-At-Tirrnidhj said it is a Hasan Hadith.

It is authenticated that the Prophet (pbuh) once visited his mother's grave and wept there so that his weeping caused his fellows to weep too. (1)

It is also authenticated that the Prophet (pbuh) kissed `Uthman Ibn Maz`un until tears streamed over his face. (2)

In addition, it is authenticated that the Prophet (pbuh) announced the death of Ja`far and those who were martyred with him, while his eyes were shedding tears. (3)

Finally, Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) is authenticated to have said that he kissed the Prophet (pbuh) after his death and shed tears for him. (4)

These are twelve proofs which indicate that weeping is not reprehensible. So the *Hadiths* preventing weeping should be considered to be connected with that kind of

---

(1) Muslim (976), as narrated on the authority of Abu Hurayrah.

(2) Abu Dawud (3163), At-Tirmidhi (989), and Ibn Majah (1456), as narrated on the authority of `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her).

(3) Al-Al-Bukhari (3757), as narrated on the authority of Anas.

(4) Al-Al-Bukhari (1241), as narrated on the authority of `Aishah.

weeping which is accompanied with loud mourning and screaming. We read in the *Hadith* narrated on the authority of `Urnar: "The dead person is torinented because of the weeping of some of his people over him." And we read in another narration: is tormented because of the wailing over him". And, Al-AlBukhari reported in his Sahih that `Umar said: "Let them weep over Abu Sulayman (i.e. Khalid IbnulWalid) so long as there is no dust pouring (on themselves) or screaming." [1]

Regarding the claim of abrogation in the *Hadith* of Hamzah, it has no proof, for it particularly referred to preventing those women from weeping any longer over the martyrs of Uhud. This is indicated by the fact that most texts that prevent weeping preceded the battle of Uhud. Among these *Hadiths* is one narrated, by Abu Hurayrah whose adoption of Islam and companionship with the Prophet took place in the seventh year after *Hijrah*. Another *Hadlth* spoke of the weeping for Ja`far and those

---

[1] Al-Bukhari, the Book of Funeral, the chapter on Wailing over the Dead. look Fat-hul-Bari (3/160).

who were martyred with him and this was in the eighth year. Also, we have, the *Hadith* concerning weeping over Zaynàb's death, which was in the eighth year as well.

The *Hadith* regarding weeping over Sa`d Ibn Mu`adh was in the fifth year. This section of *Hadiths* includes also the *Hadith* which spoke of the Prophet's weeping at the grave of his mother, and this was in the eighth year; the year when Mekka was conquered.

In reply to the saying that weeping is allowed before death, as a translation of a hopeful outlook, and as a ruling different from weeping after death, it may be said that weeping before death usually comes from grief, so as grieving after death is more difficult, the permission to weep is more recommended than in the case of hoping for a longer lifetime for the dying person. In this context, the Prophet said:

> "The eye may shed tears and the heart may grieve, but we do not say (words) which enrage the Lord. O Ibraheem! We are certainly

grieved by your (death)." [1]

Ahmad held that mourning and wailing are prohibited. It is narrated that he considered wailing to be a sin. The followers of Ash-Shafi`i and others said: "Wailing is prohibited." Ibn `Abdul-Bar said: "Jurists are in consensus that wailing is not allowed neither for men nor for women." Additionally, some later followers of Imarn Ahmad said: "It is counted as reprehensible for securing uprightness" These are the words cited by Abul-Khattab in "Al-Hidayah" (Guidance) AbulKhattab added: "Mourning, wailing, scratching the face, cleaving the outer garment and walking barefooted (to express one's grieving) are all reprehensible."

Prohibition is more virtuous here, since there is a *Hadith* in *Sahih* Al-Bukhari and *Sahih* Muslim narrated on the authority of Abdullah Ibn Mas`ud that the Prophet (pbuh) said:

---

(1) Narrated by Al-Al-Bukhari (1303), and Muslim (2315) on the authority of Anas.

"Whoever beats the cheeks (i.e. slaps himself), cleaves the (outer) garment and cries out in the manner of *Jahiliyyah* (i.e. Pre-Islamic Period) is not one of us." [1]

Abu Burdah reported that when Abu Musa was ill, he fainted while his head rested in the lap of one of the women[2] of his family. Another one of those women called out to him but he said nothing. When he awoke he said: "I am free from that which the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) was free, for the Messenger of Allah said that he is free from the woman who cries out, the woman who gets her hair cut, and the woman who cleaves her garment (at the time of bereavement)." [3]

Al-Mughirah Ibn Shu`bah reported that he heard the Prophet (pbuh) as saying:

"He who is wailed for gets tormented due to

(1) Al-Bukhari (1298), and Muslim (103).
(2) Al-Bukhari (1298), and Muslim (103).
(3) Al-Bukhari (1296), and Muslim (104)

that wailing. [1]

Ummu- `Atiyyah reported: "When the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) took our allegiance, a part of it was that we had not to wail (for a dead person), but only five women fulfilled the promise." [2]

Jbn `Umar reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said:

"The dead person is tormented in his grave because of the wailing done for him." [3]

Abu Malik Al-Ash`ari reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said:

> "There are four deeds of *Jahiliyyah,* which my nation are not going to desert: Feeling proud of noble origins, vilifying lineage, asking for rain by (the mediation of) the stars, and wailing (for the dead)."

---

(1) Al-Bukhari (1291), and Muslim (933).
(2) Al-Bukhari (1305), amd Muslim (936).
(3) Al-Bukhari (1292).

He also said:

"If the wailing woman does not offer repentance before she dies, she will be resurrected on the Day of Resurrection with a garment of liquid pitch and a shabby coat of mail." [1]

In Sunan Abu Dawud, it is reported that a woman of those who gave their allegiance to the Prophet (pbuh) said:"A part of the allegiance we gave to the Prophet (pbuh) concerning the just matters that we promised not to disobey in was that we had not to scratch the face, cry out in wailing, cleave the garments, or scatter the hair."[2]

Also Anas reported: "When the Prophet (pbuh) took allegiance from the women he stipulated that they were not to wail. So they said to him: "O Messenger of Allah! In *Jahiliyyah,* some women helped us in wailing for our dead,

---

[1] Muslim (934).
[2] Abu Dawud (3131).

could we do the same for theirs in Islam?" The Prophet said:

> "In Islam, there is no help in wailing." [1]

Another *Hadith* which has been mentioned previously reads: "Whatever thing that the hand or the tongue may produce is from the Devil." and the *Hadith,*

> "I forbade two foolish and wicked voices, one of which is that which at (the time of) bereavement scratches the face and cleaves the garments, and (the other is) the croaking of the Devil."

Abu Musa reported the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) to have said:

> "The dead person is tormented because of the wailing of the living one. When the woman wailing says: O My forearm (i.e. my helper.), my supporter, my provider of clothes, (the

---

[1] Musnad Ahmad (3/197), and An-Nasa'i (4/16)

angels) draw the dead man (concerned) and say to him: "Are you her forearm, are you her supporter, are you her provider of clothes?"[1]

An-Nu`man Ibn Bashir reported: "When `Abdullah Ibn Rawahah, fell unconscious, his sister, `Amrah, started weeping and said: "O My mountain.", and went on saying similar expressions in grief. When he awoke, `Abdullah said: "Every time you called out upon me I was asked: "Are you as she said?" So when he died, she did not (even) weep over him." [2]

How could such deeds not be prohibited while they include expressing dissatisfaction with fate, contradict patience and inflict harm upon the self.? This is made manifest in slapping the face, having the hair cut or depilated, invoking against the self, complaining against Allah (Glory be to Him), destroying property through cleaving and tearing clothes, and saying things about the

(1) Musnad Ahmad (4/414).
(2) Al-Al-Bukhari (4267).

dead person that he never did. Obviously, prohibition can be confirmed with a few of these proofs.

Those who counted mere mourning and wailing as permissible but also reprehensible quoted some texts to prove their idea. Harb reported from Wathilah Ibn AlAsqa` and Abu Wail that they used to hear people wailing but kept silent.

They also quoted what Ummu-`Atiyyah reported:

"When Allah revealed the Verse reading:

﴿ O Prophet when believing women come to thee to take the oath of fealty to thee, that they will not associate in worship any other thing whatever with Allah.", to" and that they will not disobey thee in any just matter. ﴾

(Al-Mumtahanah: 12)

Wailing was included in the Verse. So I said to the Prophet: "O Messenger of Allah! The so-and-so family

wailed with me in *Jahiliyyah,* could I do the same with them too?" He said: "Only with this family." [1]

In another narration, she said: "When we gave allegiance to the Prophet (pbuh) he recited:"... that they will not associate in worship any other thing whatever with Allah.." (To the end of the Verse), and forbade wailing. Then a woman said: "But a woman wailed with me and I want to return her help." Ummu`Atiyyah said: "The Prophet said nothing to her. She then went out, came back, and gave her promise to the Prophet."

They said that this permission which was given to some of them indicates that its being forbidden was only set for securing uprightness not for prohibition. But it must be counted as one of the deeds, which include nothing of the fore-mentioned evil expressions.

As for those who regarded it as prohibited, they said: Never contradict the *Sunnah* of the Prophet for the sake of anybody whoever he may be, nor use its parts against one

(1) Muslim (937)

another. Still, the texts we have quoted are sure, sound and explicit, so that they stand in no needed interpretation. Moreover, they are unanimously agreed upon.

As regards the woman to whom the Prophet (pbuh) said, “Only with this family.”, and the woman to whom he said nothing in reply, this Was done especially for them for two reasons:

Firstly: The Prophet (pbuh) said to other women when they asked him the same question:

“In Islam, there is no help in wailing”.

Secondly: When the Prophet (pbuh) dealt with the two women in that way, they were still newly reverted Muslims, to the extent that they were not able to distinguish between the permissible and the prohibited in such matters. Moreover, it was not reasonable to delay explanation when needed. Therefore it may be clear that this ruling was directed only to them.

It is not forbidden that one should say truthful words to express his grief for they do not contradict the prescribed holding of patience. Anas reported that Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) entered to the Prophet, after his death, and put his lips between the Prophet's eyes and his hand on his temples and said: "O My Prophet, my chosen and close friend!" (1)

Anas also reported: "When heavy suffering overcame the Prophet (pbuh), Fatima said: "How much my father is suffering!" Thereupon the Prophet (pbuh) said:

"Your father is not going to suffer after today."

When he died, she said: "O My father! Your Lord has answered your invocation and the *Firdaws* (Paradise) will be your resting-place. O My father! I am announcing your death to Jebreel." And when he had already been buried she said: "O Anas! Did you dare pour soil upon the Messenger of Allah! (2)

---

(1) Musnad Ahmad.

(2) Al-Bukhari (4462)

Moreover, the Prophet (pbuh) said:

"O Ibraheem! We are certainly grieved by your (death)."

Such words, which contain no complaint of the fate concerned, or of the Lord, or that which enrages Him, are given the same ruling for mere weeping.

As for the Prophet's saying:

"Verily, the dead person is tormented because of the wailing over him",

It is authentically narrated on the authority of `Umar Ibnul-Khattab, his son, `Abdullah, and others. However, people differed in the ways of handling this question: Some group said that Allah manages things as He wills, as the reasons of His actions are not to be sought after. Besides, there is no difference between tormenting due to wailing over the dead person and tormenting as a punishment for the sins he had committed. This is because Allah is the

Creator of everything, and He hurts even animals, children and lunatics according to his will.

Another group said that these *Hadiths* are not authentic, and `A`ishah, the mother of believers denied them and quoted as a proof the Verse reading:

> ﴿ No bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another. ﴾

(Al-An`am: 164).

And when she heard what `Umar and his son narrated, she said: "You are surely reporting from such people who are not liable to lie or be accused, but ears may mishear." Then she said: "It is that the Prophet (pbuh) passed by a grave of a Jewish man and said:

> "Verily, the man in this grave is being tormented and his family are weeping for him." [1]

[1] Muslim (929).

In another narration, she is reported to have said,

"Verily, Allah increases the torment for the disbeliever by his family's weeping for hirn."[1]

She added: "How sufficient for you is the Qur`an:

﴾ No bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another. ﴿

(A1-An'am: 164)

Another sect including A1-Mazni and others said:

"The burden of wailing is to be borne by the one who makes it as a will, if it is one of their customs."

A further group said that it is to be borne by the one who initially sets it as a convention, so long as he does not retract and prevent his people from continuing, since if he neglects to prevent it, this means that he is still satisfied

(1) AI-Bukhari (1287), and Muslim (929).

with the action being committed. This is related to Ibnul-Mubarak and others.

Abul-Barakat Ibn Taymiyyah said: "This is the most proper opinion, as man is counted as neglectful when he thinks that his people' commit such a mistake and yet does not prevent them from repeating it. In doing so, he resembles the one who neglects to forbid malifecence when he is able to do so.

But when man advises his people to stop and they refuse to listen, thus Allah is too Generous to torment him. Now the question may be settled through pondering the Verse and the general meaning of the *Hadith*. `A'ishah's denial of the *Hadith*, with this authentic group of narrators is not necessarily to be relied upon, since those narrators may have attended *Hadith* occasions which she had not. Moreover, the probability of oblivion or mistake is quite unlikely, especially with five such great Companions.

The Prophet's (pbuh) saying about the Jewish man, does not contradict the probability that those five narrators

had narrated the other *Hadith* at other times. It is worth nothing that `A`ishah herself disproved her own narration by another one she had reported as stating that the Prophet (pbuh) said,

> "Verily, Allah increases the torment of the disbeliever by his family's weeping for him."

Since increasing the disbeliever's torment is not prevented as a result of others' actions, although it thus contradicts the manifest meaning of the Verse, it does not similarly prevent it as regards the Muslim. Furthermore, since Allah never inflicts wrong upon His Muslim servant, He does not inflict it upon the disbeliever either. And, Allah knows best.

These *Hadiths* do not contain any contradiction to the manifest meaning of the Qur`an or a Shari`a rule, or a punishment to be applied to a man by the mistake committed by another. The Prophet (pbuh) did not say that the dead person is punished as a result of the weeping of his family for him; he however said that he is "tormented"

by this. This no doubt causes pain and suffering to him. Such pain is only what he receives, and it is more general than punishment. As a rule, it is not a requisite that the general should be connected to the specific. To illustrate, Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) said:

"Travelling is a piece of torment" [1]

This kind of torment is undertaken by both the believers and the disbelievers, even the dead person suffers from the punishment received by his grave-fellow just as the living person is hurt by the punishment inflicted upon his neighbour. Reflecting on this, and according to our Sheikh's way of dealing with such *Hadiths,* it may be maintained that if the people of the dead person weep for him in the prohibited manner which pertains to the *Jahiliyyah* period, and this behavior is a part of their conventions, then the dead person receives the torment for it in his grave. Thus, the pain undertaken is the torment meant in the *Hadith.* May Allah guide us all to what is sound and upright! Ameen!

[1] (Al-Bukhari (1804), and Muslim (1927)

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Patience Is a Half of Belief

Belief is divided into two equal parts between patience and gratitude. More than one of the Early Muslims said: "Patience is a half of belief", and `Abdullah Ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) reported:

"Belief is of two halves: one for patience and the other for gratitude. This may be the reason why Allah gathers patience and gratitude together in the Verse reading:

﴿ Verily in this are signs for every (soul that is) patiently constant and grateful". This idea is repeated in Surahs Ibraheem, Ash-Shura, Saba` and Luqman." ﴾

(Surah Ibrahim: 5, Luqman: 31, Saba`: 19, and Ash-Shura: 33)

There are certain points to notice concerning this issue.

Firstly, belief is a term, which includes words, actions and intentions. Furthermore, these are related to two aspects, namely doing and eschewing. Doing means to act according to Allah's instructions and this is the essence of gratitude. Eschewing means to patiently avoid indulging in sins. The whole religion of Islam is therefore inculcated in these two things: acting in accordance with instructions and avoiding forbidden deeds.

Secondly, belief rests on two pillars: faith and patience. The Qur`an refers to these two pillars in the Verse reading:

> ﴿ And We appointed, from among them, Leaders, giving guidance under Our command, so long as they persevered with patience and continued to have faith in Our signs. ﴾

(As-Sajdah: 24)

With faith, man realizes the meaning of commands, prevention, reward and punishment. With patience, he

carries out the commands of Allah and desists from what He has prevented him from doing. No doubt, he cannot truly believe that these commands, preventions, rewards and punishments are from Allah except through faith. Holding Patience, on the other hand, is the only means that enables him to hold fast to this commitment. Thus, belief is acquired only through these two parts: one for patience and the other for gratitude.

Thirdly, belief comprises both words and actions. Words are articulated both by the heart and the tongue, and the heart along with the other organs performs actions.

To clarify, it is a fact that he who knows Allah but does not acknowledge Him with the heart is not one of the believers, and Allah's Words state about the people of Pharaoh:

> ﴾ And they denied them, though their souls acknowledged them. ﴿

(An-Naml: 140)

Also we read in the Qur`an about the people of Hood and the people of Salih:

﴾ (Remember also) the `Ad and the Thamud (people): clearly will appear to you from (the traces of) their buildings (their fate): Satan made their deeds alluring to them, and kept them back from the Path, though they were keen-sighted. ﴿

(Al-`Ankabut: 38)

Also in the Qur`an Musa (pbuh) said to Pharoah:

﴾ Thou knowest well that these things have been sent down by none but the Lord of the heavens and the earth as eye-opening Evidence. ﴿

(Al-Isra`: 102)

Such people did have knowledge but were not believers. Similarly, whoever says or does what he does not believe in is not a believer, but rather a hypocrite. It is

important to note that, whoever understands the nature of something with his heart and even expresses it with his tongue is not to be counted as a believer for this only unless his heart transforms his actions into the form of love and hatred, showing patronage and hostility all for the sake of Allah. Thus, he loves Allah and His Messenger, makes close friends of Allah's patrons and shows hostility to His enemies, submits his heart only to Allah, adheres to the *Sunnah* of His Prophet, and commits totally to His Shari'ah. Even if he does all this, his belief does not reach the degree of perfection unless he fulfills all that he has been ordered to do.

These four pillars represent the pillars on which belief is based. They rest on both knowledge and conduct. Conduct includes avoiding sins. Both are to be obtained only through holding patience; so belief comes from two parts: one of which is patience, and the other originates from it through knowledge and conduct.

Fourthly, the soul has two capabilities: the power of stepping forward and the power of stepping backward. The soul always hesitates between these two powers; it may step forward to get what it likes, and step backward to avoid what it dislikes. Islam follows the same way: stepping forward to obey and backward to avoid. Patience is the only means for achieving both goals.

Fifthly, the believer deals with Islam in yearning and awe. Allah the Almighty says:

> ﴿ These were ever quick in doing in good works: they used to call on Us in yearning and awe. ﴾

(Al-Anbeiya`: 90)

And in the invocation said before sleeping the Prophet used to say:

> "O Allah! I have certainly submitted myself to You, set my face towards You, committed my own affair to You, and fallen back on

You in yearning and in awe."[1]

The believer is always between yearning and awe, which originate only in holding patience. Thus awe pushes him to adhere to patience, and yearning leads him to gratitude.

Sixthly, everything that confronts the servant in this world includes what benefits him both in the world and in the Hereafter, or harms him in both homes or benefits him in one of them and harms him in the other. The best of them is adhering to benefits him in the Hereafter and avoiding what harms him in it. This is the true nature of belief, for gratitude is to do what is beneficial for oneself and patience is to avoid the harmful.

Seventhly, the servant's affair is always one of three forms: Fulfillment of commands, avoidance of evil, and simply following one's destiny. He has to face them all with patience and gratitude, for fulfilling the commands

---

(1) Al-Bukhari (1315) on the authority of Al-Bara`Ibn `Azib, and Muslim (2710).

represents gratitude, and avoiding the prohibited and holding patience in the face of destiny represent the essence of patience.

Eighthly, there are two specific instincts in the servant: one of them summons him to his desires and the pleasures of the world, and the other instinct calls him to Allah and the Hereafter, and to the eternal joy which He has prepared for His close servants. To disobey the call for worldly pleasures means that one is patient, and to answer the call of Allah and the Hereafter means that one is grateful.

Ninthly, determination and firmness represent the pivot of Islam. The Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said:

> "O Allah! I ask you for firmness in my own affair, and determination in guidance."[1]

[1] Musnad Ahmad (4/123), and An-Nasa'i (3154) on the authority of Shaddad Ibn Aws.

Determination is the basis of gratitude, and strong firmness is the basis of patience. So whenever the servant is supported with determination and firmness, it means he is rightly guided.

Tenthly, the religion of Islam is based on two origins: truth and patience. Allah the Almighty says:

﴿ And (join together) in the mutual enjoining of Truth, and of patience and constancy. ﴾

(Al-`Asr)

The servant is commanded to conform to the truth in himself and among people; this is the true nature of gratitude. He however can do this with patience as well. This is why patience is a half of belief. Afterall, Allah knows best.

CHAPTER TWENTY

Which has Priority: Patience or Gratitude?

People have different perspectives concerning this matter. Abul-Faraj Ibnul-Jawzi reported three sayings:

First: patience is better than gratitude. Second: gratitude is better than patience, and third: both are equal, as `Umar Ibnul-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "If patience and gratitude were to be in the shape of camels, I would not care which of them I should mount."

In the following lines, we are going to present the proof shown by each sect, and highlight its level of authenticity.

The adherents to patience said: Allah has praised patience and commanded that one has to hold it, and placed on it the acquirement of good in the world and the Hereafter. Moreover, patience is cited in the Qur`an in

about ninety places, and many Qur`anic and Prophetic texts indicate that it has priority over gratitude.

To illustrate, we read a Prophetic *Hadith* in which he said:

> "The one who eats gratefully stands on the same footing with the one who fasts patiently."

Thus, the Prophet (pbuh) mentioned the *Hadith* when preferring patience to gratitude, as he attached the latter to the former. Another Prophetic *Hadith* reads:

> "The addict of Khamr[1] is as the worshiper of idols" [2]

It clearly expresses the same idea. There are also many other texts of the same nature.

---

(1) Khamr refers to everything which intoxicates.

(2) (Transmitted by Ibn Majah (3375), Ahmad (1/272) and others, but it is not unanimously agreed upon as an authenticated Hadith, as some of its transmitters were said to be untrustworthy and weak.

They also said: If we make a comparison between the texts reported on patience and their counterparts on gratitude, we will find that the texts on patience highly outnumber those concerning gratitude. To clarify, because Prayers and Jihad are the best of good works, we find *Hadiths* speaking about them in all chapters of *Hadith* books. In addition, we find that the Prophetic *Hadiths* on Prayers and Jihad in their chapters are so numerous that there is no similarity on no other topics.

The proponents of patience added that patience is connected with and attached to every chapter of *Hadith,* as well as to all matters pertaining to religion. This is why its position in belief, is as the head of the body.

Furthermore, Allah (Glory be to Him) attaches the increase of His favors to holding gratitude; He says:

﴾ And remember! Your Lord caused to be declared (publicly): "'If Ye are grateful, I will add more (favours) unto you. ﴿

(Ibraheem: 7)

He attaches the absolute rewarding to holding patience, but He does not specify the reward for gratitude, as we read in the Qur`an:

> ﴾ But Allah will swiftly reward those who (serve Him) with gratitude. ﴿
>
> (Al `Imran: 144),

yet He confines the reward for patience to beneficence:

> ﴾ And We will certainly bestow, on those who patiently persevere, their reward according to the best of their actions. ﴿
>
> (An-Nahl: 96)

Moreover, they quoted the authenticated Prophetic *Hadith* reading: "Allah the Almighty says,[1]

"All the deeds of the child of Adam are for him

---

[1] This saying of Allah is called Qudsi Haith, which is the Hadith told by Allah through His Prophet but is not part of the Qur`an. (Translator).

except Fasting, for it is verily Mine and (it is) I (who) gives rewards for it."[1]

And in another narration, it reads: All the deeds of the child of Adam are multiplied (in number) for him: one good deed is (multiplied) to ten times as much into its credit. Allah the Almighty said: "Except Fasting, for it is verily Mine and (it is) I (who) gives rewards for it". This is only because the fasting person perseveres patiently in preventing himself from submitting to the urge of his desires; we read in the same *Qudsi Hadith:*

"He abstains from his lust, food and drink for My sake."[2]

For this reason, when the Prophet was asked about the best of deeds, he said:

"Adhere to Fasting, for there is nothing equal

---

(1) Al-Bukhari (1904), and Muslim (1151) on the authority of Abu Hurayrah.

(2) Transmitted by Muslim (1151) on the authority of Abu Hurayrah.

to it."[1]

Because patience is to abstain from answering the call to desires and lusts, and the nature of fasting requires abstention from answering the call for food, drink and sexual intercourse, "patient perseverance in the Verse reading,

﴾ Nay, seek (Allah's) help with patient perseverance and Prayer. ﴿

(Al-Baqarah: 46),

Is interpreted by some scholars to refer to Fasting. Bearing in mind the same reference, some others called Ramadan "The Month of patience". Also, one of the Early Muslims said: "Fasting is a half of patience." This is because patience is to abstain from answering the call of lusts and anger, as the self tends to obtain the thing it desires, so as to get the pleasure of success, and on the other hand becomes angry when it meets something painful

[1] An-Nasa'i (4/165), Ahmad (5/255) and others.

or unliked. Yet Fasting is specifically concerned with abstaining from the desires which call to food, drink and sex, but not with the desire which calls to anger. So persevering patiently in resisting both of the two calls is an integral part of perfect Fasting. There is a reference in a Prophetic *Hadith* that if the fasting person does not abstain from such evil inclinations, Allah will not accept his Fasting; he said:

> "Whoever does not give up forged speech and evil actions, Allah is not in need of his leaving of food and drink."[1]

They added that it is sufficient for establishing the priority of patience over gratitude to quote Allah's Words:

> ﴾ I have rewarded them this day for their patience and constancy, they are indeed the ones that have achieved bliss. ﴿

(Al-Mu`minoon: 111)

[1] Transmitted by Al-Al-Bukhari (1903) on the authority of Abu Hurayrah.

Thus, He makes the achieving of bliss as the reward for holding patience. Allah the Almighty also says:

> ﴾ Allah is with those who steadfastly persevere.﴿

(Al-Baqarah: 249)

Nothing is equal to being with Allah, as some people of divine discretion said: "The patient have gone with the good of the world and the Hereafter because they have enjoyed the company of Allah." Again we read in the Qur`an:

> ﴾ Now await in patience the command of the Lord: for verily thou art in Our eyes. ﴿

(At-Tur: 48)

This includes guarding, protection and care as a consequence of patience.

Allah promises that He will give the patient three gifts, each one of which is better than the whole world and what it contains. These three gifts are blessings and mercy

in addition to bestowing guidance on them in particular. Allah the Almighty says:

> ❮ They are those on whom (descend) blessings from their Lord, and Mercy. And they are the ones that receive guidance. ❯

(Al-Baqarah: 151)

Also, Allah states in His book that patience is firmness of purpose in the conduct of affairs. He also commands His Messenger to patiently persevere, as all the Messengers of firm resolution did. This has already been discussed.

Continuing to offer their proofs, the proponents of the priority of patience said that evidence proves that holding asceticism and disinterest in the world excels taking much from it. Renouncing its pleasure is always the habit of the patient while taking much of its lawful pleasure is always the case with the grateful. They added that when Jesus (pbuh) was asked about his opinion of the two men who passed by a treasure. One of them did not pay

attention to it, but the other man picked it up and spent it in the cause of Allah. The question was literally about which of them was better than his fellow. Jesus (pbuh) said: “The one who did not pay attention to it is better in the sight of Allah.

They moreover quoted the *Hadith* stating that when the keys of the treasures of the earth were presented to the Prophet (pbuh) he rejected them, and said:

> “I prefer to be hungry on one dày and satisfied on another.”[1]

Had he taken the keys, he would have indeed spent them in the cause of Allah! Nevertheless, he preferred to hold patience in the face of them.

Human perfection resides in three matters: particular knowledge to have, precise works to do, and conditions resulting from both matters. The best of Knowledge is to know Allah and His names, attributes and acts. The best of

(1) Transmitted by At-Tirmidhi (2347) on the authority of Abu Umarnah and said it is a sound Hadith.

work is to do what Allah loves, and be ever attracted to Him by love, fear and yearning. This is the most honorable to have or to do in the world. The consequence of such knowledge and work is also the most honorable of rewards in the Hereafter. There is no more glorious objective than having the knowledge of Allah, His love and company, longing for His meeting and enjoying the sweetness of mentioning His name. This is also the most glorious kind of happiness in the world and the Hereafter; and it is the goal that is sought in its own right. When the servant leaves this world for the Hereafter, only then does he understands true and perfect happiness. Yet, in the world he cannot reach perfect happiness due to hindrances and tribulations he meets.

All fields of knowledge must be taken as a means to this realm of knowledge. These fields must be evaluated positively or negatively according to their nearness to this base. Every kind of knowledge that leads to more knowledge about the might, names and attributes of Allah

must be set as being on a higher level than the other kinds which do not lead to this. The conditions of the heart are to be looked at similarly. Whenever a condition of the heart is in accordance with the objective for which it has been created, then it is regarded as more honorable than the conditions which are not. This is also the case with works; the more near the work is to its objective, the more it is appreciated. This is why Prayer and Jihad are counted as of the best of works, as they are very close to their objectives. This is the methodology in which these issues must be handled. The work, which prepares the heart to be ready to receive knowledge of Allah, His names and attributes, and to love, fear and yearn for Him is to be given priority. If however a number of works participate in achieving an objective, the best of them is the one nearest to achieving the objective concerned. For this reason, different forms of obedience are commanded, since they all participate in achieving the objective of obedience. Sins, on the other hand, are forbidden, as they distract and stumble the heart so as not to be obedient. The impact of obedience or

disobedience relies on the degree of the individual's inclinations.

Suffice to say that any kind of work which helps in some concern may be better than in others. This may be clarified through some examples. Charity given by a stingy rich man is better than his performing Prayers at night or fasting voluntarily. Fighting against the enemy for an hour by the brave and mighty man is better than his performing Pilgrimage, Fasting, giving in charity, and performing voluntary works. Co-existing with people and teaching them their religion by a well versed jurist is better than staying in seclusion and spending time in performing Prayers, reciting the Qur`an and suchlike. Sitting for an hour to judge between people in justice, execute penance, establish the truth and put the false down by the man in authority, who is appointed by Allah to fulfill such tasks, is better than worshipping for years by others. The man who is distracted by the urge for women is more recommended to observe Fasting than to give in charity and mention the

name of Allah constantly. It may become clearer if you contemplate how the Prophet (pbuh) appointed 'Anir Ibnul'As, Khalid Ibnul-Waleed and others to do works for him and be his deputies, and did not appoint Abu Dhar. He rather said to him:

> "I see you are weak, and I like for you that which I like for myself: Never be the leader of (even) two people, nor do you take charge of the property of an orphan."[1]

On the authority of Abu Dhar.) The Prophet (pbuh) also ordered him and others to observe Fasting; he said:

> "Adhere to Fasting, for there is nothing equal to it."[2]

He moreover ordered another one

"not to become angry"[3]

---

[1] Transmitted by Muslim (1826), and An-Nasa'i *(6/255)*.
[2] Its Transmission has been mentioned before.
[3] Transmitted by Al-Bukhari (61 16) on the authority of Abu Hurayrah.

He also ordered another one.

"to keep his tongue damp with the mentioning
of (the name of Allah."[1]

Moreover and important still, when Allah wants to bestow perfection on His servant, He guides Him to utilize the whole of his capacity in preparing himself for the Hereafter. This enables him to be distinguished among people.

This is similar to the case of the patient who has a stomachache. If he takes the medicine prescribed for his disease, the pain will go away, but if he uses the medicine for headache, for example, it will be of no use for him. Also, miserliness, which one yields to, is one of the sins that lead to the Fire; its consequences cannot be removed even with constant observance of Fasting and performance of Prayer at night for a hundred years. Following one's private goals and self-admiration cannot be removed by

(1) Transmitted by At-Tirmidhi (3375) and others, and AtTirniidhi said it is Hasan Gharib.

constant recitation of the Qur`an or utilization of one's whole capacities in pursuing knowledge, worshipping and holding to asceticism; yet it can be annihilated by replacing it with its opposite. And, if someone asks, "Which has priority; food or water?" the suitable answer would be that each one has priority in its own position.

Understanding this rule, we realize that showing gratitude through giving in charity is such a good work that it creates a certain condition in the heart, namely the removal of stinginess and avarice because the world no longer has any influence on it. The consequence would be constant readiness to receive the knowledge and love of Allah. This is mainly because the plague that prevents the heart from fulfilling its objective has been uprooted by the suitable remedy. Poverty, which is connected with asceticism, makes the servant in no need of shouldering the hardship of this plague or seeking its treatment; hence, his capacity can wholly be utilized in achieving its primary objective.

In this light, the proponents of patience raised this question: What would be the answer if someone said: "But the *Shari`ah* calls for good works in general"? They cleverly answered the presumed question saying:

"When the doctor recommends and praises a certain drug, it does not necessarily mean that such a drug is to be sought in its own right, nor does it mean that it is better than the remedy it secures; yet works represent the treatment for the (spiritual) diseases of the heart, which are mostly not realized. So the *Shari`ah* motivates Muslims to perform the work with which the heart may be treated, and it is the main objective. Therefore, when the poor man takes your alms, he takes along with it the disease of miserliness, just as cupping draws the harmful blood.

Thus, it becomes clear that the condition of the person holding patience resembles that of the one who is maintaining his health and strength, and that the condition of the one holding gratitude resembles that of the one who seeks the remedy of his disease with different

kinds of drugs.

The reply of the proponents of gratitude[1] The proponents of the idea that gratitude has priority over patience said: You have gone beyond limits, given priority to something which is not entitled to it and put the means before the goal, that which is to be sought for reasons other than itself, before that which is to be sought in its own right. You have put perfect work before that which is most perfect, and the good work before that which is the best. You have not known the right of gratitude, nor have you put it in its proper degree, even though Allah connects it with His remembrance in mentioning, and both are the objective of creation and the command[2] and both of them are served by patience which is a means to them. Allah the Almighty says:

---

(1) This title is added by translator.

(2) The command here represents all the commands of Allah. The saying that gratitude and remembrance of Allah are the goal of command and the Creation may mean that when creatures obey Allah's commands they consequently remember Him and show gratitude to Him. (Translator).

﴾ Then do ye remember Me; I will remember you. Be grateful to Me, and reject not Faith.﴿

(Al-Baqarah: 152).

Allah (Glory be to Him) connects gratitude with belief, and states that He has no interest in tormenting His creatures as long as they hold gratitude and belief, He says:

﴾ What can Allah gain by your punishment, if you are grateful and ye believe? ﴿

(An-Nisa`: 147),

Meaning that if you fulfill the objective you have been created for, that is represented in gratitude and belief. What can Allah gain by your punishment?

Besides, Allah (Glory be to Him) states that the grateful people have the merit of obtaining His favor from amongst the other servants; He says:

﴾ Thus did We test some of them by others, that they should say: "Is it these then that Allah has favored from amongst us?" Doth not

Allah know best those who are grateful? ﴿

(Al-An`am: 53)

He also divides people into two categories: the grateful and the ungrateful. He likes most gratitude and those who hold it, and hates most ingratitude and those who hold it. He the Almighty says:

﴾ We showed him the Way: whether he be grateful or ungrateful. ﴿

(Al-Insan: 3)

And His Prophet Sulayman (pbuh) said (as cited in the Qur`an):

﴾ This is by the grace of my Lord! to test me whether I am grateful or ungrateful, and if any is grateful, truly his gratitude is (a gain) for his own soul; but if any is ungrateful. truly my Lord is free of all needs, supreme in Honour! ﴿

(An-Naml: 40)

Another verse reads:

﴾ And remember! Your Lord caused to be declared (publicly): "If ye are grateful, I will add more (favors) unto you; but if ye show ingratitude, truly My punishment is terrible indeed. ﴿

(Ibraheem: 7)

﴾ If ye reject (Allah), truly Allah hath no need of you; but He liketh not ingratitude from His servants: If ye are grateful, He is pleased with you. ﴿

(Az-Zumar: 7)

There are many such Verses in which Allah compares gratitude to ingratitude, as being its opposite. Further we read:

﴾ Muhammad is no more than a Messenger: many were the Messengers that passed away before him: If he died or were slain, will ye

then turn back on your heels? If any did turn back on his heels, not the least harm will he do to Allah; but Allah (on the other hand) will swiftly reward those who (serve him) with gratitude. ﴿

(Al `Imran: 144)

It is those who serve Allah with gratitude, who were firm in belief, and did not turn back on their heels.

Allah states[1] that he adds more favors to those who are grateful to Him. Such additions have no end, just as the reasons of showing gratitude towards Him have no end.

Likewise, Allah confines many of His rewards and favors to His will. To illustrate, He says regarding enrichment,

﴾ And if ye fear poverty, soon will Allah enrich you, if He wills, out of His bounty. ﴿

(At-Tawbah: 28);

---

[1] As in the Verse above (Ibraheem: 7).

He says about His answering invocations,

❴ And if it be His will, He would remove (the distress) which occasioned your call upon Him. ❵

(Al-An`am: 41);

He says about abundance,

❴ Allah bestows His abundance without measure on whom He wills. ❵

(Al-Baqarah: 212)

He says concerning forgiveness,

❴ He forgiveth whom He pleaseth. ❵

(Al`Imran: 129),

And He says about repentance,

❴ Allah will turn (in mercy) to whom He wills. ❵

(At-Tawbah: 15)

He also does not specify the reward for gratitude, as stated in the Qur`an Words reading:

> ﴾ And swiftly shall We reward those that (serve Us with) gratitude. ﴿

(Al-`Imran: 145),

And,

> ﴾ But Allah will swiftly reward those who (serve Him) with gratitude. ﴿

(Al-`Imran: 144)

When Iblees (The name for Satan.) realized the value of gratitude, and that it is most valuable and supreme, he made his major goal to prevent people from holding it. The Qur`an tells us his saying in this regard:

> ﴾ Then will I assault them from before them and behind them, from their right and their left: nor will thou find, in most of them, gratitude (for Thy mercies). ﴿

(Al-Ara`f: 17)

In fact, the grateful are few, as Allah describes them in the Qur`an,

﴾ But few of My servants are grateful. ﴿

(Saba`: 13)

Umar Ibnul-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that he heard a man saying: "O Allah! Make me one of the few! "Then `Umar said to him:

"What is this?" The man said: ""O Commander of Believers! Allah says,

But only a few believed with him ~ (i.e. the Prophet Noah. (pbuh)) (Hud: 40),

and says,

﴾ But few of My servants are grateful. ﴿

(Saba`: 13),

and says,

﴾ Not so do those who believe and work deeds of righteousness, and how few

they are! ﴿,

(Sad: 24)

Thereupon 'Urnar said: "You have pointed out the truth."

As the Qur`an states, Allah (Glory be to Him) praises the first Messenger He sent to the people of the earth for his gratitude; He says:

﴾ O ye that are sprung from those whom we carried (in the Ark) with Noah! Verily he was a devotee most grateful. ﴿

(Al-Isra`: 3)

This specific mentioning of Noah and addressing the servants as being his progeny may indicate that Allah means in this context to command His servants to follow Noah's example, as he is their second father, since Allah extended the creation of people after the Ark, only from the progeny of Noah. Allah says:

﴾ And made his progeny to endure (on this earth).﴿

(As-Saffat: 77)

Thus, He commands the progeny to follow the steps of their father and be grateful servants. Allah (Glory be to Him) also tells us that His true worshippers have to be grateful, otherwise they are not equal to the honor of His worship:

﴾ And be grateful to Allah, if it is Him ye worship. ﴿

(Al-Baqarah: 172)

He also commanded His servant Moses (i.e. The Prophet Moses. (pbuh) to be grateful for the prophet-hood, message, and His direct communication with him through speaking. Allah the Almighty says:

﴾ O Moses! I have chosen thee above (other) men, by the messages I (have given thee) and the words I (have spoken to thee); take then

(the revelation) which I give thee, and be of those who give thanks. ❩

(Al-A`raf: 144)

The first thing that Allah enjoins upon man is to show gratitude to Him and to his parents. He says:

❨ And We have enjoined on man (to be good) to his parents: In travail upon travail did his mother bear him. And in years twain was his weaning: (hear the command), "Show gratitude to Me and to thy parents: to Me is (thyfinal) Goal. ❩

(Luqman: 14)

Allah moreover tells us that His satisfaction resides in showing gratitude to Him. He says:

❨ If you are grateful, He is pleased with you.❩

(Az-Zumar: 7)

Allah (Glory be to Him) praises in the Qur`an the

gratitude of His Close Friend, Abraham. He says:

> ❮ Abraham was indeed a model, devoutly obedient to Allah (and) true in faith, and he joined not gods with Allah. He showed his gratitude for the favours of Allah, Who chose him, and guided him to a straight Way. ❯

(An-Nahl: 120-121)

Thus, Allah states that Abraham was a model to follow, and that he was obedient to Allah and true in faith, which means that he submitted to Allah the Almighty. Then Allah seals these attributes with gratitude, making it the goal of His Close Friend.

Allah in extension tells us that gratitude is the goal of creation. He says:

> ❮ It is He Who brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers when ye knew nothing; and He gave you hearing and sight and intelligence and affections: that ye may give

thanks (to Allah). ﴾ (An-Nahl: 78)

He also says:

﴾ Allah had helped you at Badr, when ye were helpless: then fear Allah: thus may ye show your gratitude. ﴿

(Al-`Imran: 123)

The manifest meaning of the Verse may indicate that the Words, "thus may ye show your gratitude." represent the reason why He had helped them or why He commanded them to fear Him, or for both reasons, as gratitude is mainly the goal of creation and the command. As the Qur`an states, gratitude is the goal of the command and of sending messengers. Allah says:

﴾ A similar (favour have ye already received) in that We have sent among you a Messenger of your own, rehearsing to you Our signs, and purifying you, and instructing you in Scripture and Wisdom, and in new

knowledge. Then do ye remember Me; I will remember you. Be grateful to Me, and reject not Faith. ﴾

(Al-Baqarah: 151-152)

The proponents of gratitude went on to say that gratitude is to be sought in its on right; yet patience is to be sought for other purposes. Praising patience originally relies on its connection to gratitude; thus it only serves it.

It is reported that the Prophet (pbuh) performed Prayer (constantly) until his feet split so much so that someone said to him: "Are you doing this, while Allah has forgiven you the faults of the past and those to follow?' He said:

"Should I not be a grateful servant?"[1]

On the authority of Al Mughirah Ibn Shu`bah.) In another authentic *Hadith,* the Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said to Mu`adh:

---

[1] Al-Bukhari (4836), and Muslim (2819).

"By Allah, I do love you, so do not forget to say after the end of every Prayer: "O Allah! Help me to remember You, be grateful to You, and worship You in the best way!" (1)

Ibn 'Abbas reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said:

"There are four (gifts or bounties) which if they are given to someone, he is (consequently) given the good of the world and the Hereafter. (They are): a grateful heart, a mentioning tongue(2) a body which perseveres patiently (in the face of) tribulations and a wife who does not betray him neither in herself or in his property."(3)

`A`ishah also reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said:

"Whenever a servant is given a favor from

(1) Musnad Ahmad *(5/245)*, and Abu Dawud (1522).

(2) (i.e. mentioning the name of Allah and other articulated forms of worship. (Translator),

(3) Ibn Abud-Duniyah in Ash-Shukr, p. 24,At-Tabarani in Al-Kabir (11/134).

Allah and he (faithfully) knows that it is from Allah, Allah certainly writes[1] that he will show gratitude for it. And whenever Allah knows that some servant regrets a sin, He certainly forgives him before he asks for forgiveness. Verily, when a man buys a garment for Diners and wears it and praises Allah, Allah forgives his sins before the garment comes to his knees."[2]

The Prophet (pbuh) is also reported to have said:

"Verily Allah is pleased with the servant who praises Him when he eats and praises Him when he drinks."[3]

What a great reward is Allah's pleasure. which is the greatest reward for praise; Allah the Almighty says:

﴾ But the greatest bliss is the Good pleasure of

(1) i.e. in the book of his destiny. (Translator).
(2) Narrated by At-Tabarani in Al-Awsat, and its transmission is not absolutely authentic. Others also narrate it.)
(3) Muslim (2734) on the authority of Anas Ibn Malik.

Allah.﴿ (At-Tawbah: 72)

Yahiya Ibn `Atarid Al-Qurashi reported that his father said that the Prophet (pbuh) said:

"Allah never guides a servant to gratitude and (then) deprives him of addition."[1] This is because Allah the Almighty says:

﴾ If ye are grateful, I will add more (favours) unto you. ﴿

(Ibraheem: 7)

Al-Hasan Al-Basri said: "Indeed Allah gives as many favors as He wills but if the servant does not praise Him for them, He turns them into (a source of) torment." For this reason scholars used to call gratitude "the keeper", for it keeps the bounties which are at hand, and "the bringer", for it brings missing bounties.

Ibn Abud-Duniya reported that `Ali Ibn Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) said to a man from

(1) Ibn Abud-Duniya in Ash-Shukr, p.13)

Hamadhan: "Favor is connected with gratitude, and gratitude is restricted to adding, and both of them are always bound with each other. So, Allah will continue to add until the servant stops showing gratitude."

Mutraf Ibn `Abdillah said: "Good health with gratitude is more preferable than illness with patience." Moreover, Al-Hasan said: "keep remembering such favors, for this represents (their) gratitude". In extension, Allah commanded His Prophet to rehearse and proclaim his Lord's bounty. Allah the Almighty says:

﴾ But the Bounty of thy Lord rehearse and proclaim! ﴿

(Ad-Duha: 11)

Undoubtedly, Allah likes to see the mark of His bounty on His servant, for they implicitly express his showing gratitude.

`Ali Ibnul-Ja'd said: "I heard Sufiyan Ath-Thawri as saying: "When Dawud said: "All praise be to Allah as much

as the honor of His face and prestige of His glory deserve.", Allah revealed to Him: "O Dawud! You have made the Angels suffer."

Abu Raja` Al-`Ataridi said: "'Imran Ibnul Husayn went out for us wearing a well-made garment that we had never seen him wearing before. Then `Imran said:"The Prophet (pbuh) said:

> "When Allah bestows a bounty on a servant, He likes to see the mark of His bounty on His servant."'[1]

`Amr Ibn Shu`ayb reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said:

> "Eat and drink, and give alms with no pompousness or extravagance, for Allah likes to see the mark or His bounty on His servant."[2]

---

(1) Musnad Ahmad (4/43 8) on the authority of 'Iniran Ibnul-Husayn, and At-Tirmidhi (2819).

(2) Transmitted by An-Nasa`i (5/79) but with the words: "Eat and give alms, and get clothes (but) with no extravagance or pompousness.

Abul-Ahwas reported that his father said:

"I came to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) in a miserable appearance. He asked me: "Do have property?" I said, "Yes." The Prophet said: "What kind of property?" I said, "All kinds. Allah has given me camels, horses, slaves and sheep." Then the Prophet said:

"When Allah gives you property let it (i.e. its mark.) be seen on you"[1]

Bakir Ibn `Abdullah reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said:

"Whoever is given some bounty and its mark is seen on him, is called a beloved of Allah and the one who rehearses and proclaims His Lord's bounty; and whoever is given some bounty and its mark is not seen on him is called the one who is detestable to Allah and

[1] An-Nasa`i (8/196), and Ahmad (3/473).

denier of His bounty."[1]

Allah (Glory be to him) is not pleased with the man who does not show gratitude. Commenting on the Verse reading:

﴾ Truly Man is, to his Lord, ungrateful. ﴿

(Al-`Adiyat: 6),

Al-Hasan said: "The ungrateful man here, is the one who counts bereavement and forgets beneficence." The Prophet (pbuh) also stated that women represent most of the people of the Fire because of ingratitude; he said:

> "If you keep being beneficent to one of them and then she sees you doing something (wrong to her) she says: I have never seen you doing anything good."[2.]

If this is the case with the woman who is not grateful to her husband, so what is the position of the one who is

---

(1) Ibn Abud-Duniya in Ash-Shukr, p.32.

(2.) This is part of the Hadith narrated by Al-Bukhari (29), and Muslim (907) on the authority of Ibn `Abbas.

ungrateful to Allah?

An-Nu`man Ibn Bashir reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said:

> "Proclamation of bounties is gratitude and leaving it (i.e. the proclamation.) is ingratitude." Whoever does not show gratitude for a little (bounty) does not show gratitude for a much (bounty either). In addition, whoever does not show gratitude to people does not show gratitude to Allah (either). Union (brings) blessing, but division (brings) torment."[1]

Once Bakr Ibn `Abdillah heard a porter as saying:

"Praise be to Allah. I ask Allah for forgiveness." Then I said to the man: "Do you not know words other than these?" The porter said: "I know many good things. I can read the Book of Allah, but man is always between a

[1] Ibn Abud-Duniya in As-Shukr, p. 32) with these words, and Ahmad (4/278) but with different arrangement of words.

bounty and a sin, so I praise Allah for his bounty and ask Him to forgive my sin." Thereupon I said: "The porter is more intellectual than I am."

Jabir Ibn `Abdillah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "The Prophet (pbuh) went out to his Companions and read out Surah Ar-Rahman thoroughly. They remained silent. Then the Prophet (pbuh) said:

> "I read it out for the Jinn when I met them, and their reaction was better than yours. Every time I came to the words, ﴿ Then which of the favours of your Lord will ye deny?﴾ they said: "O our Lord! We deny nothing of Your bounties: Praise be to You!"[1]

Mus`ar said: "When these Words were said to the sons of David: (Exercise thanks sons of David) (Saba`: 13) there was performance of Prayers every hour passed."

Abu Mu`awiyah said that 'Umar Ibnul-Khattab was

(1) At-Timidhi (3291). He said it is a Gharib Hadith.

putting on a shirt. When it came to his clavicles, he said," Praise be to Allah who has given me this shirt, with which I can cover my private parts and beautify myself in life." Then he extended his hands and cut off the unnecessary part he noticed and said: "I heard the Prophet (pbuh) as saying:

> "Whoever wears a garment (I think he said a new one (These words were added by `Umar (translator) and says when it comes to his clavicles or he said, "Before it comes to his knees" these words then he takes his old garment and gives it to a needy person, he remains in the neighborhood, custody and protection of Allah both in life and after death as long as (even) a thread of this garment remains."

Shurayh said: "There are three favors from Allah in every event bearing bereavement: that it is not in one's religion; it may have been more strenuous than it is; and it

is a part if his inevitable destiny."

`Abdullah Ibn `Umar Ibn `Abdil-`Aziz said: "Whenever `Umar Ibn `Abdil-`Aziz looked at a bounty from that which Allah had bestowed upon him, he used to say: "O Allah! I seek refuge with You not to exchange Your favor with ingratitude, not to be ungrateful for it after I have known it (i.e. after I have known it is from You). and not to forget it or neglect praising it."

Moreover, in some Qudsi Hadith, Allah (Glory be to Him) says: "O Child of Adam! Good is descending to you from Me, but your evil is ascending to Me. I seek your love through favors, but you seek My detest through sins; and there is still a noble Angel ascending to Me with an ugly deed of yours."

Anas Ibn Malik said: "Whenever a servant is incumbent on worshipping, Allah certainly sends down bounties for him, and makes the children of Adam bear them to him. If this servant accepts the bounties, showing gratitude becomes a must on him. But if he rejects them,

Allah, Who is Free of all wants and Worthy of all praise, gives them to some of His poor servants, who show Him gratitude."[1]

A man asked Ibn Taymiyah: "How have you entered upon this morning?" Ibn Taymiyah said; "I have entered upon this morning between two favors, and I do not know which of them is better than the other; one of them is sins that Allah has covered, that no one will humiliate me concerning, them, and the other favor is the affection that Allah has put for me in the hearts of people, though (I, because of) my deeds do not deserve it."

`Abdullah Ibn Salam narrated that Moses (pbuh) said to Allah: "O my Lord! How could we show You gratitude as You deserve?" Allah said: "Keep your tongue wet with My remembrance.

Abu Hurayrah reported that a man from Al-Ansar, from the people of Qiba` invited the Prophet (pbuh) and we went with him. After the Prophet (pbuh) had eaten and

[1] Ibn Abud-Duniya, Ash-Shukr, p. 30.

washed his hands, he said:

> "Praise be to Allah Who feeds but is not fed; Who is the Most-Generous, that He has guided us, provided us with food and water, and tested us with every good test. Praise be to Allah. My lord never forsakes, nor is He rewarded, shown gratitude or unneeded. Praise be to Allah Who gives food and drink, clothes the undressed, guides the wandering, bestows vision on the blind, and confers special favors above a great part of His Creation. Praise be to Allah. The Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds."[1]

Imam Ahmad narrated that Abul-Khuld said: "I read that David (pbuh) said: "O my Lord! How could I show You gratitude, while I could only reach Your gratitude through Your favors?" Abul-Khuld said: "Allah revealed to

[1] Transmitted by An-Nasa'i in The work done at daytime and at night (303), and by others.

him saying: "O David! Do you not know that the favors bestowed upon you are from Me?" He said: "O My Lord! I do know." Allah said:

"Then I am pleased with this (knowledge and admittance) to be your gratitude shown." 'Abdullah Ibn Ahmad narrated that Sa`id Ibn `Abdul-`Aziz said: "A part of David's invocations was: "Glory be to (Allah) Who brings gratitude out through bounties, and brings invocation out through testing."

Ahmad narrated that Wahb said: "I found in the Book of the sons of David (these words): "By My Glory, whoever holds firmly to Me I (ever) prepare a way out for him, even if the heavens and its residents and the earth and its residents plan against him. And whoever does not hold firmly to Me I deprive him of bounties, and cause the earth to sink down from below his feet and make him (suspend) in the air, then I make him put trust (only) in himself. How sufficient it is for My servant that I be (the Sustainer of) his property; if My servant is obedient to Me, I give him

before he asks, and answer him before he invokes Me, and I am certainly more knowing of what he needs than he (himself) is."

Ahmad also narrated that Thabit said: "David used to divide the hours of the night and the daytime between his family, that there was one of his Sons performing Prayers as every hour passed." Thabit added:

"Allah (Glory be to Him) gathers them, in mentioning, in the Verse reading:

﴾ Exercise thanks sons of David, but few of My servants are grateful! ﴿

(Saba`: 13)

Ibn Abud-Duniya narrated that Abul-khuld said:

"Moses (pbuh) said: "O My Lord! How could I show You gratitude, while my whole work is not enough to match the gratitude deserved for the smallest of the favors You have bestowed upon me?" Abul-Khuld said:

"Then Allah revealed to him saying: "O Moses! Now

you have shown (the) gratitude (deserved) to Me."

Bakr Ibn `Abdillah said: "Whenever a servant says, "Praise be to Allah", it becomes a must on him to show gratitude for guiding him to saying it by repeating it again. Continuing in this way, he never reaches full gratitude deserved for Allah's favors."

Al-Hasan said: "The Prophet (pbuh) heard a man as saying: "Praise be to Allah for Islam." Thereupon he

said to the man: "You are praising Allah for a great favor indeed!"

Sulayman At-Teiyami said: "Verily Allah (Glory be to Him) bestows favors on His servants in accordance with His capacity, but He commands them to thank Him in accordance with their capacity."

Al-Hasan reported that Moses (pbuh) said: "O My Lord! How could Adam thank you perfectly for what You did for him, as you created Him with Your hands, breathed into him of Your spirit, let him dwell in Your Paradise, and

made the Angels prostrate themselves before him?" Allah said: "O Moses! He knew that these (favors) were from Me and praised Me for them, and that was the gratitude deserved for what I had done for him."

Having relieved himself, 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib rubbed his belly with his hand and say: "What a great favor! But people do not show the gratitude deserved for it."

Anas Ibn Malik reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Favors, and good and bad deeds will be brought on the Day of Resurrection, and Allah will say to one of the favors: "Take your right. (It may be the right which he violated when he rejected to show gratitude for it (Translator) out of his good deeds." Then the favor takes all his good deeds."[1]

Ibn Abud-Duniya narrated that Sadaqah Ibn Yasar said: "As David (pbuh) was in his chamber, a little ant passed by him. He looked at it contemplating and wondering at its creation and said, "Would Allah not con-

(1) Ibn Abud-Duniya, Ash-Shukr, p. 18.

cern Himself with this?" Thereupon Allah made it speak saying: "O David! Do you like yourself? By Him in Whose hand is my soul, I am more grateful for what Allah has given me than you are for what He has given you."

Sufiyan Ath-Thawri said: "It was said that whoever does not count tribulation as a favor and prosperity a calamity is not a man of intelligence."

Abu Hurayrah reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said:

"Allah (Glorified and Exalted by He) says:

"Verily the believer in My eye is placed in the position of all goods; he praises Me (even) when I pluck his soul out from between his flanks."[1]

Ibnus-Sammak wrote a letter to Muhammad Ibnul-Hasan after the latter had been given the charge of the post of judge of Al-Kufah. Ibnus-Sanimak said in the letter: "Continue in consciousness of Allah, and fear Him for

---

[1] Ahmad (2/34 1) and others.

every favor for which you show little gratitude and (for the one which you) use in disobedience to Him. This is because showing little gratitude is a liability imposed upon you, and using the favors (of Allah) in disobedience, is a proof against you. May Allah forgive you whenever you show little gratitude, disobey, or neglect!"

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said:

> "If you like to see how valuable Allah's favor (shown) to you is, then contemplate (the status of) those who are below you, and do not look at (that of) the ones who are above you."[1]

Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that `Umar Ibnul-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) offered the greeting of Islam to a man, and the latter replied to it. Then `Umar said to him: "How are you?" The

---

(1) Ibnul-Mubarak in Az-Zuhd; Asceticism, p. 502, and Ibn AbudDuniya in Ash-Shukr, p. 43.

man said: "Praising Allah." `Umar said: "This is what I wished to know (of your affair)."

Commenting on the Verse in which Allah says:

﴾ And has made His bounties flow to you in exceeding measure, (both) seen and unseen.﴿

(Luqman: 10),

Mujahid said: "Allah may mean by this the saying, "there is no god but Allah." In the same connection, Ibn `Uiaynah said: "There is no better favor shown by Allah than His teaching of His servants that "There is no god but Allah." Ibn `Uiaynah added: ""There is no god but Allah" will be as valuable to him or her in the Hereafter as water in the world."

Salman Al-Farisi (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that Allah gave a man many bounties and then took them back. In reaction, the man thanked and praised Allah. A well-to-do person asked him: For what are you praising Allah?" The man said: "I am praising Him for

bounties that none of which can be compensated, by the bounties bestowed on all people." The man said, "What are these bounties!" The man said: "Vision, tongue, hands, feet and the like."

Ja`far Ibn Muhammad (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that when his father lost a she-mule, he promised that if Allah brought it back to him, he would have praised Him in such away with which He would be pleased. When the she-mule was brought back to him, he raised his head up to the sky and said: "Praise be to Allah." Someone enquired about[1] and my father said: "Have I left anything? I have made "all" praise be to Allah."

Abdur-Rahman Ibn Zayd reported that Muhammad Ibnul-Munkadir said to Abu-Hazim: "O Abu Hazim! I meet many people, who invoke Allah for me, though I do not know them. Besides, I have never done anything good for them." Abu Hazim said: "Never think that this refers to

---

(1) He thought it might have not been sufficient to fulfill the promise with. (Translator).

your own deeds, but show gratitude to the One Who shows you such favors." Then Abu `Abdur-Rahman, the narrator, recited the Verse reading:

﴾ On those who believe and work deeds of righteousness, will the Most Gracious bestow Love.﴿

(Maryam: 96)

'Ali Ibnul-Ja`d said that Abu Bakr As-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) said in his invocations: "O Allah! I ask you to show me perfect favors, and to help me be so grateful for them, that You may be pleased."

Al-Hasan is reported to have said: "Whenever a man says, Praise be to Allah", after Allah has given him a bounty, what he has given[1] becomes better than what he has been given[2] Ibn Abud-Duniya narrated that Sufiyan Ibn `Uiaynah commented on Al-Hasan's words saying:

---

[1] i.e. the gratitude shown by the words: 'praise be to Allah' (Translator).

[2] (i.e. The bounty given). (Translator).

"This is a wrong presumption, for man's deeds can never be better than Allah's." But I (the author) should say that Al-Hasan's words are not as Ibn `Uiayanah described. This is because the saying "Praise be to Allah" is a bounty in its own right, and so is the thing for which man says this, to praise Allah. Some bounties are better and more glorious than others. In this regard, gratitude, as a bounty, is more glorious than property, progeny, wives and the like. Yet, this never means that man's deeds are better than Allah's, for man's deeds themselves are a bounty bestowed by Allah.

Ibn Abud-Duniya reported that some people of knowledge said: "A man of knowledge should praise Allah for things that He has not given him, just as he praises Him for things He has bestowed on him. In fact, he praises Allah because He has not imposed upon him the inconvenience of accounting, which is applied to every bounty bestowed."

Commenting on the Verse reading:

﴾ We will lead them step by step to ruin while they know not. ﴿

(Al-A`raf: 182),

Sufiyan said: "It means that Allah gives them bounties in great quantities but deprives them of showing gratitude for them." Another interpreter said: "Whenever they present a sin He presents a bounty to lead them to ruin through it." And Abu Hazim said: "Be careful of Allah when you see Him providing you with bounties one after another while you are disobeying Him."

Hiql Ibn Ziyad As-Saksaki reported that Al-Awza`i preached to them saying: "0 people! Seek strength in these bounties, which Allah has bestowed upon you. Use them to escape from the flaming Fire, for you are in a kind of home that will perish very soon. Everyone knows that the past centuries have witnessed many peoples who exceeded you in capacity of strength, power, and property, and in many other facilities. Though, they perished along with their

facilities. Contemplate what happened to them, and the nature of the end of the disobedient among them. Never be like the ones who were deceived by false hope in a long lifetime. May Allah help us to follow and continue on the straight path leading to the Hereafter!"

`Uthman Ibn `Affan (may Allah be pleased with him) was told that some people were committing some suspicious action. When he went to apprehend them, they spread out before he reached them. He then set a slave free as a gesture of showing gratitude to Allah because He did not humiliate a Muslim with his hands.

Asbagh Ibn Yazid reported that Noah (pbuh) used to say after relieving himself: "Praise be to Allah Who has made me taste its pleasure, kept its benefit in my body, and warded off its harm." Ibn Yazid added that, that was why Allah called him a devotee, most grateful. Concerning the same invocation, `A`ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) reported that the Prophet (pbuh) used to say it (i.e. Noah's invocation) after relieving himself.

Someone asked Abu Hazim: "What is the gratitude of the eyes?" He said: "To proclaim whatever is good and cover whatever is evil that you may see with them." The man said: "And what is the gratitude of the ears?" He said: "To keep whatever is good and forget about whatever is evil that you may hear with them." The man said: "And what is the gratitude of the hands?" Abu Hazim said: "Not to take with them what they are not entitled to, and not to prevent Allah's rights which are to be fulfilled by them." The man, further, asked: "And what is the gratitude of the genitals?" He said: "Allah says (in speaking of the attributes of believers): "And who guard their modesty, except with those joined to them in the marriage bond, or (the captives) whom their right hands possess, for (in their case) they are free from blame, but those whose desires exceed those limits are transgressors." (Al-Mu`minun: 5-7)" Then the man said: "And what is the gratitude of the feet?" Abu Hazim said: "You may use them to do good work done by a deceased man whose righteousness and piety you knew well."

No doubt, the gratitude shown only by the tongue is not sufficient. 'Abdullah Ibn Al-Mubarak narrated that the Negus sent to Ja`far and his companions (at the time of the migration to give them glad tidings that Allah had favored His Messenger and believers with victory over disbelievers). When Ja`far and his companions came to the king they found him sitting on the ground and wearing humble clothes. Noticing their astonishment, he told them that some of the teachings delivered by Jesus (pbuh) was that servants of Allah must show humility to Allah when he shows them His favors."[1] mad.)

The Prophet (pbuh) used to fall down in prostrate adoration showing gratitude to Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He), when he received something pleasant[2] Following the Prophet's footsteps, Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) fell down in prostration showing

---

(1) Narrated by Ibn Al-Mubarak in Az-Zuhd, Asceticism (p. 53) on the authority of Na'im Ibn Ham

(2) Transmitted by Abu Dawud (2774) At-Tirmidhi (1578), and Ibn Majah (1394) on the authority of Abu Bakrah. At-Tirmidhi said it is a Hasan Gharib Hadith.

gratitude to Allah for the murder of Musaylimah.

`Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) also did so on a similar occasion.

One may ask: "Why is the new favor given such a characteristic of gratitude showing (i.e. prostration) despite the fact that the permanent one may be greater?"

In reply, some people of knowledge said that this may be for four reasons:

First, the new favor may remind man about the permanent one.

Second, it requires a new ritual of worship. The easiest form of this is prostration, and it is more liked by Allah.

Third, the new favor has more effect on the souls, and the hearts are more attached to it. This is why man receives congratulations when given it and consolations when losing it.

Fourth, the humility and submission shown to Allah

through prostration prevents man from the bad consequences of joy that is not liked by Allah, or ingratitude. One of them always follows the showing of favor. Receiving of the favor shown with that kind of joy which Allah does not like or with discontent and ingratitude may enrage Allah the Almighty. In addition, we may remember in passing the example of the king Negus' mentioned above.

Among the favors of Allah that the servant may not realize is, that when he closes his door Allah may send him someone who asks him for something to eat aiming at reminding him of His favors on him.

Salam Ibn Abi Mutee` said: "When I entered a man's house to visit him in his illness, I found him moaning and sighing. I said to him: "Remember those who are lying on the streets, and those who have no lodge, nor do they have anyone to care for them." Ibn Abi Mutee` said: "When I entered to see him later, I heard him saying to himself: "Remember those who are lying on the streets, and those

who have no lodge, nor do they have anyone to care for them."

`Abdullah Ibn Abi Nuh said: "Once someone asked me: "How often did you act in a way that Allah dislikes but He treated you in a way that you liked?" I said:

"This is too much to count." He asked me again: "Have you ever asked Him to remove sorrow from you and He let you down?" I said: "Never, by Allah. On the contrary, He always treated me fairly and helped me." Then the man asked: "Have you ever asked Him for something and He did not give it to you?' I said: "No, He always gives me from what I ask Him for." Thereupon the man said: "If someone did you some of these favors, what would you do for him in reward?" I said:

"His deeds would then be too high to appreciate by mere rewarding." He said: "Then your Lord is more worthy of constant and frequent showing of gratitude, for He is the One Who did you favors in the past and the One who is bestowing bounties on you right now. By Allah,

showing gratitude to Allah is easier than rewarding His servants. He (Glory be to Him) is pleased by mere praising, as a mark of gratitude."

Ibn Abi-Hawara said: "I said to Abu Mu`awiyah:

"What a great favor monotheism is! May Allah not deprive us of it!" He said: "The Bestower of favors always perfects them for His servants. Allah is Most Generous that He bestows perfect favors and bounties, and He accepts His servants' good deeds."

Ibn Abil-Hawara said: "A woman said to me: "I want to know Allah's favors on me and any negligence in showing the gratitude deserved for them as soon as I have received them." I said to her: "You want something that is beyond our minds!"

Ibn Abud-Duniya narrated that that David (pbuh) said: "O my Lord! Tell me what is the lowest of Your favors upon me?" Allah revealed to Him saying: "O David! Breathe." When he did, Allah said: "This is My lowest favor upon you.

Contemplating these facts and situations, we may understand the meaning of the *Hadith* in which the Prophet (pbuh) said:

> "If Allah torments the residents of His heavens and the residents of His earth, He will torment them with no wrong imposed on them, and if He has mercy on them, His mercy will be better for them than their own deeds."[1]

This is because the servant's deeds, however many, cannot be equal even to one of Allah's favors. Moreover, there is no human word that may express the praise and gratitude deserved for Allah.

Abul-Mulayh said that Moses (pbuh) said: "O My Lord! What is the best way of showing gratitude?" Allah the Almighty said: To show Me gratitude in all events."

`Abdul-`Aziz Ibn Abi Dawud said: "I saw an ulcer on the hand of Muhammad Ibn Wasi`. When he observed that

---

(1) Sunan Abu Dawud (4699), Ibn Majah (77) and Ibn Hibban (727).

I felt sorry for him he said: "Do you not know that Allah has bestowed a favor on me when He did not make it on my eye, tongue, or privates?" Then his ulcer became easy in my sight."

Mu`adh Ibn Jabal (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (pbuh) passed by a man and heard him saying: "O Allah! I ask You for the most perfect of favors." The Prophet said: "O Child of Adam! Do you know what the most perfect of favors is?" The man said: "O Messenger of Allah! I (only) invoked wishing for good." The Prophet said:

> "Verily the most perfect of favors is to escape from the Fire and enter Paradise."[1]

It may stand as evidence for the priority of gratitude over patience that Allah likes most to be asked for well being. Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said:

---

[1] 1,2. For more Hadiths on this point refer to Al-Bukhari (5673, 5458).

"Verily forgiveness and well being are the best (favors) that people are ever given in this world, so ask Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) for both of them."[1]

In *Sahih* Muslim, the Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have visited an ill man, who had become so thin, that he was like a chick. (Seeing him like this,) the Prophet (pbuh) said to the man:

"Did you invoke Allah with something or to give you something (in particular)?" The man said: "Yes, I said: "O Allah! Give me beforehand in this world the punishment that which You are going to give me in the Hereafter!" Thereupon the Prophet (pbuh) said:

"Glory be to Allah! You cannot bear it [or you cannot stand it]. Rather, you (should) say: "O

---

[1] Narrated by An-Nasa'i in "Work of day and night" (892). You may also refer to At-Tirmidhi (3514), Muslim (486) and An-Nasa'i in "Work of day and night" (887) for more Hadiths on this point.

> Allah, our Lord! Give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter, and save us from the torment of the Fire!" Then the Prophet invoked Allah for the man and He cured him."[1]

Shayban said: "Al-Hasan used to say, when he sat at a sitting: "Praise be to You for Islam, praise be to You for the Qur`an, and praise be to you for wives and property. You have expanded provision for us, given us manifest safety, recovered us in the fairest way, and given us from everything for which we have asked You. Praise be to You as much as You bestow favors on us. You have given us much good and warded off much evil. So praise be to Your most Majestic, Abiding and Eternal Face!"

The Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said:

> "Whoever says in the morning, "O Allah! All the favors with which I and everyone of Your Creation have entered upon the morning are

---

[1] Muslim (2688).

from You, only You, so praise and gratitude be to You", he (by then) will have shown the gratitude (deserved) for that day. And whoever says like this in the evening, he (by then) will have shown the gratitude (deserved) for his night[1]."[2]

Wahb Ibn Munabbih said: "The best of favors are three: First: the favor of Islam, without which all favors could not be perfect. Second, the favor of well being, without which life would not be easy. Third, the favor of independence, without which living would not be perfect."

Wahb passed by a wetted, blind, leprous, handicapped and undressed man and heard him saying:

"Praise be to Allah for His bounties." Thereupon a man accompanying Wahb said: "Which bounty has been

(1) But with, as derived from another narration, changing the phrase, "upon the morning" into, "upon the night", as the author or the reporter must have forgotten it here.(Translator)

(2) Transmitted by Abu Dawud (5073), An-Nasa`i in Work of day and night (7) and Ibn Hibban (681) on the authority of Ibn `Abbas.

saved for you to praise Allah for?" The man said:

"Look at the city and see how populous, it is. Should I not praise Allah because He knows only me from amongst its people!"[1]

It is also reported that the Prophet (pbun) said

"Whenever Allah bestows some bounty upon a servant and he praises Him for it, he[2] (in fact) shows the gratitude (deserved) for it"[3]

It is reported that 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib (May Allah be pleased with him) said: "Bukhtunsar asked for Daniel, then he ordered his servants to imprison him in a well. Bukhtusor deprived two lions of food for a long time, then he released them in order to prey him. When he opened the

---

(1) i.e. Allah gave only him the honor of testing from amongst the people of the city.(Translator)

(2) The servant.

(3) Transmitted by Al-Bayhaqi in Ash-shu`ab (8/352) on the authority of Jabir, and by Al-Hakim in Al-Mustadrak (1\507). Al-Hakim said it is an authenticated Hadith, but Adh-Dhahabi said that one of its transmitters, 'Abdur-Rahman Ibn Qays was a liar.

well after five days he found Daniel performing Prayer and nothing had hurt him from the two lions that were lying in the corner of the well. Then he said to Daniel: "What did you do to have such protection?" He said: "I said: "Praise be to Allah Who never forgets whosoever remembers Him. Praise be to Allah Who always answers whosoever invokes Him. Praise be to Allah Who never lets down whosoever puts his trust in Him. Praise be to Allah Who is our only trust when we have nothing to save ourselves from danger. Praise be to Allah Who is the only hope for us when we fear our bad deeds. Praise be to Allah Who wards off the harm we face. Praise be to Allah Who meets good works with good rewards. And praise be to Allah Who always procures salvation for whosoever holds patience."

Ibn Sirin said: "Ibn `Umar used to look a lot in the mirror. When I asked him about it, he said that when he looked at his face he praised Allah for everything good-looking he saw, for the same thing might be bad-looking in some other people's faces."

Bakr Ibn `Abdüllah said: "O Sons of Adam! Close your eyes, if you want to know the value of the bounties that Allah has bestowed upon you.

Commenting on the Verse reading: "And has made His bounties flow to you in exceeding measure, (both) seen and unseen.'", Muqatil said: "The seen bounties are represented in Islam, and the unseen ones represent His covering of your sins."

Ibn Shawdhab[1] reported that 'Abdullah Ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "Allah certainly bestows merit on the people of the Fire, and it is that if He wanted to torment them with something severer than it, He would do so."

Abu Sulayman Ad-Darani said: "Those who will sit beside the All-Merciful (i.e. Allah) on the Day of

---

(1) His full name is 'Abdullah Ibn Shawdhab Al-Khurasani, and he was a trustful successor of the Early Muslims. His death was in 156 or 157 after Hijrah. The four Imams of Fiqh reported from him, and so did Al-Bukhari. Refer to Taqribut-Tahdhib, vol.1, p.423.

Resurrection are the persons who are generous, forbearing, kind, merciful, grateful, righteous, and patient."

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "Let him who sees his brother undergoing tribulation say: "Praise be to Allah Who has made well for me what He has tested you with, and conferred on me special favors, above you and above His Creation." By then, he will have expressed the gratitude deserved for these favors."[1] And 'Abdullah Ibn Wahb said that he heard `Abdur-Rahman Ibn Zayd saying: "The truly grateful person praises Allah in the most perfect way. Then he explained it saying: "He contemplates the bounties of Allah in his body: his hearing, vision, hands, feet, and the like, and finds that there is no place in it but contains (at least) one of Allah's favors. It is a duty upon the servant to use the bounty that is in his body only in complementing Allah's commands concerning it, and so must he deal with the other bounties. Only in this

[1] Transmitted by At-Tirmidhi (3432), and Al-Bayhaqi in Ash-shu`ab (8\380). At-Tirmidhi said it is a Gharib Hadith.

way will he have praised Allah perfectly."[1]

Ka`b said: "Whenever Allah bestows some bounty upon someone and he shows gratitude, Allah surely gives him its benefit in the world, and raises him up in ranks and degrees in the Hereafter. And whenever Allah bestows some bounty upon someone but he does not show gratitude, Allah certainly deprives him of its benefit in the world, and opens gates for him to the Fire, with which He torments him unless He forgives his sin."

Al-Hasan said: "Whoever sees only food, drink and clothes from among Allah's bounties upon him, it means that he is short of knowledge, and that the time of his torment is quite close."

`A`ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said:

Whoever drinks pure water, and it enters with no harm(i.e. safely) and then goes out with harm(i.e. urine), it becomes a must on him to show gratitude for it."

[1] Ibn Abud-Duniya, Ash-Shukr, p.82.

Some people told Al-Hasan that a man confined himself away from people. Al-Hasan went to the man and asked him about it. The man said: "Every day I enter upon the morning and night between sins and favors; so I wanted to occupy my time in asking Allah to forgive my sins, and in showing gratitude for the favors He bestowed on me." Thereupon Al-Hasan said: "O Servant of Allah! You understand matters better than I do. Go on as you are."

Ibn Abud-Duniya narrated that Muharib Ibn Dithar said in his invocation: "O Allah! Praise be to You. You have raised me, provided me with strength and power, made me independent, helped me get married, and fed and clothed me. You always accompany me in my travels, secure my mount, and return me back safe and sound. You cure me, give me when I ask, and respond to my invocations. All praise be to You."

Commenting on the Verse reading:

﴾ But if you count the favours of Allah, never will ye be able to number them. ﴿

(Ibarheem: 34),

A scholar said: "Glory be to Allah Who has made one's confession of his disability of knowing the true value of bounties, the only available knowledge about them, just as He has made the only limit of seeing Him that man realizes that no one can see Him. Knowing that His servants cannot go beyond these limits, Allah makes it a sign of gratitude that they certainly believe that they cannot show the true gratitude deserved for His bounties, just as He makes it a sign of belief that His servants know He is never to be seen.

`Abdullah Ibn `Amr reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said:

> "Allah builds a house in Paradise for the one who enjoys four qualities: (first) holding fast in his affair by there is no god but Allah; (second) saying, when being afflicted with calamity, "To Allah we belong, and to Him is our return."; (third) saying, when being given something, "Praise be to Allah."; and (fourth)

saying, when having committed a sin, I ask Allah to forgive me."[1]

Commenting on the Qur`anic Words reading: "Verily he was a devotee Most grateful", Mujahid said:

He[2] praised Allah for everything he ate, for everything he drank, and for every time he used an organ, that Allah praised his deeds and said he was most grateful."

Gratitude as a right of Allah[3]

There are two types of rights that Allah has on His servants: First: fulfillment of His commands, and Second: Showing gratitude to Him.

Allah (Glory be to Him) orders His servants to show gratitude to Him, and to fulfil His commands. Since he is always neglectful in carrying out these rights. the servant realizes how badly he is in need of Allah's forgiveness, otherwise he will be punished for his negligence. The more

(1) Ibn Abud-Duniya, Ash-sbukr, p. 89.
(2) This title is added by translator.
(3) This title is added by translator.

he understands his religion, the more his feeling of fear and yearning increases. Religion is not only to avoid what Allah dislikes, but also it is to do what He likes. Interestingly enough, Allah detests most the ones who pay no attention to the hard commands pertaining to matters, such as Jihad and commanding of good and forbidding of wrong. These people do not even think of handling such tasks. For this reason, they are worse in the sight of Allah, than the people of *kaba`ir*. (*Kaba`r* means major sins.)

When a servant witnesses the favors of Allah, he realizes that his good deeds are nothing in comparison to them. This is because no one can number Allah's favors, and the smallest one amongst them exceeds all the servant's good deeds. Therefore, the servant has to always contemplate Allah's right of gratitude upon him.

Eventually, as long as the servant witnesses Allah's bounties and the duty of showing gratitude ordained for them, he keeps accusing himself of negligence. Nevertheless, when he fulfills the duty ordained, he gets very close to the mercy of Allah. May Allah help us all!

CHAPTER TWENTY ONE

How to Settle the Argument

Before passing judgment on or comparing between two things, one should first have a clear conception of both. We have previously mentioned the reality of patience, its degrees and categories. Now, we will shed light on the reality of gratitude.

According to *Al-Sihah,*[1] the Arabic word *Shukr,* gratitude in English, means to praise a bounteous 182 person for a certain favor. In the Glorious Qur`an, Allah says,

> ﴾ We feed you for the sake of Allah alone: no reward do we desire from you, nor thanks.﴿
>
> (Al-Insan: 9)

Gratefulness is the antithesis of thanklessness.

To be grateful to Allah, Man should fulfill the following

---

[1] An Arabic lexicon. (Translator).

three conditions:

a) To acknowledge Allah's favor,

b) To thank Him, and

c) To make use of the gift in seeking Allah's Pleasure.

People, on the other hand, differ as to the precise meaning of "gratitude to Allah." Some of them define it as Man's acknowledgement of his Lord's favor, which results in his full surrender to Him. Others define it as praising the Bounteous Giver by declaring His grace. Another group regard it as observing Allah's Grace, avoiding prohibition and fulfilling the duties. Still, some deem the thankful man as one who sees himself as a parasite who totally depends on Allah's bounties. Gratefulness lurks in one's admission of his failure to fulfill the requirements of Allah's praise. A well-known proverb reads, "thanking Allah for His guidance to gratitude, is one's supreme form of gratitude." This means that one should thank Allah when He guides him to be grateful for a Divine favor. Thankfulness, according to another group of people, signifies one's

feeling that he does not deserve Allah's favor. Others say it is to do your utmost in obeying the Almighty, Allah. Furthermore, some distinguish between the grateful servant of Allah and the ever-grateful one through the following:

-The former is the one who thanks Allah for receiving a Divine gift whereas the latter is the one who thanks Allah when He prevents him.

-The former thanks Allah when He gives him whereas the latter thanks Him when He abstains from giving him.

-The former thanks Allah when He showers His gifts on him, whereas the latter thanks Him even in times of trials and tribulations.

Al-Junaid narrated that, "Once I was playing before As-Suri when I was seven years old. Meanwhile, some people were tackling the issue of gratitude to Allah. As-Suri asked me about my point of view. Thereupon I declared, 'It is to keep yourself aloof from disobeying Allah by using His bounties.' As-Suri responded, 'Your tongue will almost bring you closer to Allah. `Until this

day, I am weeping because of the latter's statement (for fear of Allah).'"

Ash-Shibli said: Gratefulness is to yearn for the Provider not the provision. However, perfect thankfulness requires the ability to see the gifts.

Abu `Uthman further said: The common persons thank Allah for their provision, food and clothing, whereas the nearest men to Him offer thankfulness for senses they find in their hearts.

It is narrated that once a king imprisoned a Muslim person. A friend of the latter wrote to him to keep thankful to Allah. When the prisoner was beaten, his friend advised him again to thank Allah. Moreover, the prisoner was tied up with a Zoroastrian who used to stand by night many times. The friend kept advising the Muslim prisoner to be thankful to Allah. Due to being overwhelmed by anxiety, the prisoner cried:

"Oh, friend, to what extent can I bear! Nothing can be more heavier than my state" Confidently, his friend replied,

"What can you do if you have a belt around your waist[1] like this Zoroastnian? Therefore, you should be thankful to Allah Who has guided you to Islam."

A man complained to Sahl Ibn `Abdullah saying, "A thief entered my house and stole my property." Thereupon he said, "Be thankful to Allah! What can you do if the thief, Satan, crept into your heart and corrupted your belief?"

It is also said: Gratefulness signifies the wholehearted sense of joy when praising Allah without the anticipation of gifts.

A well maxim reads: If you cannot offer recompense, you should offer thanks.

Another maxim reads: No benefit can be expected in the following:

a) Bestowing grace to an ungrateful man.

---

[1] This is a symbol of embracing other beliefs than Islam. (Translator)

b) Putting seeds in a salty soil, and

c) Lighting a lamp in the light of the sun.

Gratefulness pertains to one's heart, tongue and organs:

The heart should be used to love and know the Almighty, Allah,

The tongue should be used to praise and thank Him, and

The organs should be used to obey Allah as well as in refrain from contradicting His ordinances.

Thankfulness, however, relates to actions while praising relates to words. The reasons for praising are more general than the reasons for thankfulness. On the other hand, the means of offering thankfulness are more general than the means of offering praise. To explain this, we can say that one praises Allah by His Names, Attributes, Decrees and Gifts while he thanks Him only for His gifts. Similarly, Man thanks Allah by means of his heart, tongue and organs while he praises Him merely by his heart and tongue.

In fact, patience and thankfulness are interrelated although both terms are used separately when a single trait dominates. Thankfulness consists of patience, will and conduct. Accordingly, it involves carrying out Allah's ordinances and abstaining from contradicting Divine Laws. Patience is the core of thankfulness. That is because patience in worshiping Allah and in abstaining from wrong actions is the essence of thankfulness. If patience is a must, fulfilling it is the means to thankfulness.

Some people may argue that the above-mentioned analysis conveys that both patience and thankfulness are synonyms. This is, of course, in contradiction to reason, language and custom. In the Glorious Qur`an, a distinction between them has been alluded to.

The simple reply to those people is that: Both terms are not similar even though they pertain to each other. By the same token, gratitude without patience is null and void and vice versa.

Some people may argue that between rebellious and

grateful people there is another class of men who hardly and unwillingly keep patient. Those people are neither grateful nor impatient.

The aforementioned argument is rootless since our discussion focuses on the good patience not the enforced type like that upon mindless animals. Unlike enforced patience, good patience is a characteristic of the grateful servants of Allah.

A reference to a single character, patience or gratefulness, depends on the situation. In times of adversity, for example, a reference will be for patience although it contains gratefulness. In times of ease, a reference will be for gratefulness although it entails patience. Degrees of faith do not eliminate each other. *Ihsan*[1], for example, does not eliminate Iman.

---

(1) Ihsan means to worship Allah as though you are seeing Him, and while you see Him not, yet truly He sees you. On the other hand, Iman means to believe in Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, and the Last Day, and to believe in the Divine Destiny. This is stated in a Hadith narrated by Muslim. (Translator)

Allah, Most High, tests His servants by both bounties and tribulations. In the Glorious Qur`an, He says,

﴾ And We test you by evil and by good by way of trial.﴿ (Al-Anbiya': 35)

﴾ Now, as for man, when his Lord trieth him, giving him honor and gifts, then saith he, (puffed up), 'my Lord hath honored me!' But when He trieth him, restricting his subsistence for him, then saith he (in despair), 'My Lord hath humiliated me!'﴿

(Al-Fajr:15, 16)

﴾ That which is on earth We have made but as a glittering show for it, in order that We may test them as to which of them are best in conduct. ﴿ (Al-Kahf: 7)

﴾ He Who created death and life, that He may try which of you is best in deed. ﴿

(Al-Mulk: 2)

﴾ He it is Who created the heavens and the earth in six Days-and His Throne was over the waters that He might try you, which of you is best in conduct.﴿ (Hud: 7)

In the above-mentioned *Ayat,* Almighty Allah discloses the fact that He has created the heavens and earth and what they contain to test Man thereby. Man is required to be patient and grateful in times of adversity and ease, and in states of happiness and sorrow. Patience in worshiping Allah is heavier than patience in abstaining from wrong action and patience in times of trial and adversity. The Companions used to say, "In time of trials we were patient, while in time of ease some of us failed to be patient." Gratitude for diseases and tribulations is more virtuous than gratitude for ease. Diseases, poverty and adversity may be better for Man than the other gifts.

Almighty Allah tests Man with gifts and bestows His gifts on him in the form of tribulations. Man is in constant need to be grateful and patient regarding Allah's decrees,

commands and prohibition.

However, a question about the superiority of patience or gratitude is equal to the unreasonable question about the superiority of food or drink, fear of or hope in God, and sense or move.

Carrying out duties requires both patience and gratitude. Similarly, abstaining from wrong actions requires the both traits. In times of tribulation, one's patience should entail thankfulness. Thankfulness, on the other hand, entails patience.

To clarify, I would like to focus your attention on the fact that Allah, Most High, tests His servant even by his soul and its inclinations. For his part, Man should persist in disciplining his soul and combating its evil desires. This is true concerning each servant of Allah, whether poor or rich, ill or sound.

Muslim scholars have debated, as Abu Faraj Ibn Al-Jawzi and others have narrated, about the superiority of grateful rich or the patient poor.

However, God-consciousness is the main criterion in differentiating people. Whoever attains a higher level of God-consciousness will be the superior one and vice versa. Therefore, wealth, poverty, illness or health is of no consideration in this regard.

Allah Most High declares,

> ﴾ The most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you ﴿ (Al-Hujrat: 13)

Also, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said,

"Surely, there is no superiority for an Arab over a non-Arab except through God-consciousness. All people are offspring of Adam and Adam was created from dust."[1]

God-consciousness is founded upon patience and gratitude. It is a necessary characteristic for both the rich and the poor. The higher degree a person of God-

---

(1) Ahmad, Musnad, vol. 5, p. 411.

consciousness, the more virtuous he will be.

Furthermore, fulfilling one's duties and doing supererogatory actions bring one nearer to Allah. In a *Qudsi hadith,* Allah says,

> "My servant draws not nearer to Me with anything more loved to Me than the religious duties I have enjoined upon him, and My servant draws nearer to Me with supererogatory works so that I shall love him."[1]

Some people may argue that it is narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) said,

> "From my *Ummah,* the poor will precede the rich to Paradise by half a day, which equals five hundred years."[2]

In fact, the above *hadith* has no indication to the

---

[1] Al-Bukhari, Sahih, No. 6502, on the authority of Abu Hurairah.

[2] At-Tirmidhi, Jami`, No. 2354. Also, Ahmad, Musnad, vol. 2. p.451..

superiority of the poor over the rich. What the *hadith* conveys is that the wealthy man may enter Paradise after the poor due to a long *Hisab.* A just wealthy ruler may, for example, enter Paradise after the poor while the former may be of a higher degree in Paradise than the latter.

Others may argue that the Prophet (pbuh) said to the poor persons who complaint to him that the well-to-do persons would precede them in virtue because the former spend in the way of Allah while the latter have nothing to spend. Thereupon the Prophet (pbuh) said to them, "Would I tell you about something if you do, you will attain the degrees of those who surpassed you." Then he advised them to keep making mention of Allah after each Prayer. However, when the wealthy men knew this, they did the same. On his part, the Messenger (pbuh) consoled the poor saying, "This is the bounty of Allah, He gives it to whom He pleases." Consequently, this refers to the superiority of the grateful wealthy men over the poor.

However, the above *hadith* supports our point of view

that doing supererogatory actions raises one's degrees in virtue. Both parties are equal in carrying out duties and supererogatory actions. As the well-to-do spends in the way of Allah, the poor keeps patient in times of Jihad and trials.

It may be further argued that the Prophet (pbuh) was offered to be a wealthy man but he refused saying,

> "I prefer to become full in a day and hungry in another."

Likewise, `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said,

> "Until his death, the Prophet (pbuh) never ate his fill of wheat bread. On the time of his death, the Prophet's armor was mortgaged to a Jewish man for some foodstuff for his household."[1]

`Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) narrated,

> "A woman from the Ansar entered my room

[1] Al-Bukhari, Sahih, No. 6454. Also, Muslim, No. 2970

> where she saw a bent cloak on the Prophet's bed. On returning to her house, she sent a woolen mattress to be put on the Prophet's bed. When the Prophet (pbuh) entered my room, he asked, 'What is this?' 'So and so has sent it,' I replied. He said, 'Give it back to her!' As I wished it to be in my room, I did not give it back to her until he commanded me three times when he said, 'Oh `Ahishah! Give it back to her! By Allah, if I wish (to be a wealthy man), Allah will grant me mountains of gold and silver.' Thereupon, I gave it back.[1]

Accordingly, some people argue that poverty is better than richness since Allah Most High had chosen this for His Messenger.

In fact, both parties, rich and poor, seek support in the Prophet's (pbuh) character. However, the Prophet (pbuh)

---

[1] Imam Ahmad, Az-Zuhd, p.14.

experienced the two states, poverty and richness. He was the master of both the grateful rich as well as the patient poor. Whoever ponders the Prophet's biography will see clearly that the Prophet (pbuh) attained the higher degrees of patience and gratitude. In the Glorious Qur`an, this fact is confirmed by the *Ayah,*

> ﴿ And He found thee in need, and made thee independent. ﴾ (Ad-Duha: 8)

According to this glorious *Ayah,* Allah, Most High, made His Prophet grateful and rich after he was poor. No particular party, therefore, has the right to confine the Prophet's character to its own stand.

It may further be claimed that although `AbdurRahman Ibn `Awf (may Allah be pleased with him) was a grateful man, it is narrated on the authority of `Imarah that Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "Once `Aishah heard a great noise and asked about the matter. On hearing that a caravan, about 700 camel, for Ibn `Awf came from Syria, she said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) as saying,

'I have seen `Abur-Rahman Ibn 'Awf entering Paradise crawling.'"[1]

When Ibn `Awf knew this, he said, "I wish I could enter it walking." Therefore, he endowed the entire caravan for the sake of Allah.

This *hadith,* however, is false and fabricated one according to Imam Ahmad. Imarah, the narrator of the *hadith,* is untruthful. Regarding the latter, Abu Hatim Ar-Razi said, "The narrations of `Imarah Ibn Zadhan is unauthentic."

Abu Al-Faraj said Al-Jirah Ibn Minhal narrated on the authority of `Abdur-Rahman Ibn `Awf that the Prophet (pbuh) said to him,

"Oh Ibn `Awf! You are a wealthy man but you will enter Paradise crawling, therefore, you should loan to Allah a beautiful loan. Consequently, He will release your feet

[1] Ahmad, Musnad, vol. 6, p. 115.

(when passing over the *Sirat*)."[1]

Abu `Abdur-Rahman An-Nisa`i said: This *hadith* is a fabricated one and its narrator, Al-Jirah, is untruthful. Yahya said: Al-Jirah's narration is null and void. Ibn Hibban said: Al-Jirah used to tell lies.

To support their opinion, some people mention the *hadith* narrated by Al-Baihaqi on the authority of Khalid Ibn Yazid Ibn Abi Malik, which reads,

> "The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said to `Abdur-Rahman Ibn `Awf, 'Oh Ibn `Awf! You are a wealthy man but you will enter Paradise crawling, therefore, you should loan to Allah a beautiful loan. Consequently, He will release your feet.' Ibn `Awf asked, 'Oh Messenger of Allah! What can I loan to Allah?' He said, 'You should clean yourself from your entire wealth this night.' Ibn `Awf said, 'Oh Messenger of Allah, should I spend

(1) Reported by al-Hakim in al-Mustadrak, vol. 3, p. 311.

all my property'?' 'Yes,' the Prophet replied. Anxiously, Ibn `Awf left the Messenger of Allah whereupon Jibreel came to the Prophet saying, 'Command Ibn `Awf to generously host the guests, feed the indigents, provide first his family and to give the beggar. In doing so, he will clean himself.'"[1]

The above *hadith* is also fabricated since its narrator, Khlid Ibn Yazid, is untruthful according to the sayings of Imam Ahmad, Ibn Ma`ien, An-Nsa`i and other scholars.

Others quote the following *hadith* to maintain the superiority of the patient poor over the grateful rich:

`Ubaidullah Ibn Zahr narrated that `Ali Ibn Yazid said Al-Qasim Ibn `Abdur-Rahman reported: The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said,

"I entered Paradise and heard a sound before

[1] Al-Baihaqi, Shu'ab al-Iman, vol. 6. p. 512

me. On asking about that sound I was told that it is the sound of Bilal. I moved forwards and saw the majority of the people of Paradise from among the poor immigrants *(Muhajreen)* and the Muslim offspring. However, I did not see among them the rich or the women. I was told that the rich people did not finish their reckoning and the women were diverted by gold and silk (from seeking the Hereafter). Afterwards, we went out Paradise. Then I was put in a scale and my *Ummah* in another, and my scale outweighed my *Ummah*. Similarly, each of Abu Bakr and `Umar outweighed the entire *Ummah*. On observing my *Ummah,* I did not see `Abdur--Rahman Ibn Awf who came after a long time. Having seen him, I called, 'Oh 'Abdur-Rahman!' He said, 'Oh Messenger of Allah, may my father and mother be a ransom for you! I did not think that I would reach you

until my hair became gray.' I asked about the reason when he disclosed, 'Due to my great wealth,

I experienced a long reckoning.'"[1]

In fact, this hadith is fabricated, according to Abu Al-Faraj, and its transmitters are untruthful as stated by Yahya and Ibn Hibban.

Abu Al-Faraj commented on the above *hadith* saying, "Some false ascetics rely on this *hadith* to claim that wealth diverts Man from good-doing since 'Abdur-Rahman Ibn `Awf, who was a wealthy man, entered Paradise crawling. On the contrary, this *hadith* is null and void for `Abdur-Rahman was given glad tiding by the Prophet. to enter Paradise. Consequently, it is unreasonable to admit that the latter's wealth deferred him on entering Paradise. Acquiring wealth, through legal means, is permitted while acquiring wealth through illegal means or abstaining from fulfilling one's financial duties is prohibited. Ibn `Awf, of

---

[1] Ahmad, Musnad, vol.5, p. 259.

course, steered clear of these faults. After his death, Talhah (may Allah be pleased with him) left behind a huge property, 300 camels's load of gold. The same is true regarding other great Companions like Ibn AzZubair. Had the acquisition of money been abhorrent, they would by no means have saved anything therefrom."[1]

The author of this book, however, said, "Due to his desire to protect the character of Ibn `Awf, who was one of the first group of Muslims and whom the Prophet gave glad tidings of Paradise, Al-Faraj exceeded the limit and ignored some authentic *ahadith* that prove the precedence of the poor to Paradise.

Although Al-Faraj was justified in depriving the above-mentioned two *ahadith* from authenticity, he cannot deny the authenticity of the following *ahadith:*

1- Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) said,

---

[1] Abu Al-Faraj, Al-Mawdu`at, vol.2, pp.13, 14.

"From among Muslims, the poor will precede the rich to Paradise by half a day, which equals five hundred years."[1]

2- Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both) narrated that the. Prophet (pbuh) said,

"On the Day of Judgment, the poor among the *Muhajireen* will precede the rich by forty years."[2]

3- Once the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) asked the Companions,

"Do you know who is the first in entering Paradise?" They replied, "Allah and His Messenger know best." He responded, "The poor people among the *Muhajireen*... "[3]

4- Jabir (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that

---

(1) This hadith is Sahih according to At-Tirmidhi.
(2) Reported by Muslim, No. 2979.
(3) Ahmad, Musnad, vol. 2, p. 168, on the authority of `Amr Ibn Al'Aas.

the Prophet (pbuh) said,

> "From my *Ummah,* the poor will enter Paradise before the rich by forty years."[1]

The above authentic *ahadith* confirm the precedence of the poor to Paradise. However, some of them will precede by five hundred years whereas others will precede by forty years. Admittedly, some who enter Paradise later may be of higher degrees than the forerunners to it. The just rules, for example, will enter Paradise after the poor subjects. Yet, the former will be of higher degree than the latter. The Sunnah, in more than one place, confirms this fact. `Abdullah Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both) narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) said,

> "On the Day of Judgment, the just rulers will sit on pulpits of light beside the Right Hand of Allah. Yet, Both of Allah's Hands are Right. Those rulers are the just ones regard-

[1] Reported by At-Tirmidhi, No. 2355.

ing their rulings, families and duties."[1]

Abu Said Al-Khudri narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) said,

> "On the Day of Judgment, the most beloved by and nearer to Allah, of people, are the just rulers. On the other hand, the most abhorrent by Allah and the ones who will receive the most grievous chastisement are the tyrannical rulers."

Although the just ruler and the wealthy man enter Paradise after the poor, they may be of higher degrees in Paradise than him. By the same token, Ibn `Awf will enter Paradise after the poor among the Companions, but he may be of higher degree in Paradise than them. There is no contradiction between this and his being among the early Muslims.

The *hadith* which mentions Ibn `Awf's crawling on

---

(1) Reported by Muslim, No.1827.

entering Paradise is said to be fabricated and false *hadtih* according to Imam Ahmad and An-Nasa`i.

Allah, Most High, tests His servants' faith and surrender by both poverty and richness. In the Glorious Qur`an, Allah says,.

﴾ We test you by evil and good by way of trial.
To us must ye return.﴿

(Al-Anbiya`: 35)

In his commentary to the above *Ayah,* Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both) said, "Allah tests His servants by adversity and ease, health and illness, richness and poverty, the lawful and the prohibited."

Also, Ibn Yazid said, "Allah tests His servants by what they like and what they do not like. Allah's aim is to see the patience and gratitude of people."

Al-Kalbi said: Evil, in the above *Ayah,* means poverty and tribulations whereas Good means offspring and property. Allah, Glorified and Exalted be He, declares both

richness and poverty to be trials and tests.

He, Most High, says,

> ﴾ Now, as for Man, when his Lord trieth him, giving him honor and gifts, then saith he, (puffed up), 'My Lord hath honored me. But when he trieth him, restricting his subsistence for him, then saith he (in despair), 'My Lord hath humiliated me! Nay, nay... ﴿

(Al-Fajr: 15-17)

In these glorious *Ayat,* it is clear that abundance and limitation in one's provision are Divine tests. Allah, therefore, rebukes the narrow-minded men who wrongly perceive gifts and abundance in provision as honor while they perceive lack of provision as dishonor.

In *Surat* Al-An`am, this principle is reinforced when Allah says,

> ﴾ It is He Who hath made you the inheritors of the earth: He hath raised you in ranks, some

above others: that He may try you in the gifts He has given you: For thy Lord is quick in punishment: yet He is indeed Oft-Forgiving Most Merciful. ﴾

(Al-An`am: 156)

Also, in *Surat* Al-Kahf, He says,

﴿ That which is on earth We have made but as a glittering show for it, in order that We may test them-as to which of them are best in conduct. ﴾ (Al-Kahf:7)

Now, it becomes clear, through the aforementioned three *Ayat,* that Allah Most High has created the entire universe, heavens and earth, and what it contains of various pleasures, with the aim of testing the faith of His servants and to see which of them are best in conduct.

This aim is the purpose for which the universe was created. Reward and punishment are the ends of this test decreed by Allah. In no way, this Decree was issued in

vain. Allah makes this clear saying,

> ﴾ Did they then think that We have created you in jest, and that ye would not be brought back to Us (for account)? Therefore, exalted be Allah, the King, the Reality: there is no god but He, the Lord of the Throne of Honor.

(Al-Mu`minun: 115, 116)

Just as Allah declares Himself clear of taking partner, son, wife and other deficiencies, He declares Himself clear of creating anything in jest. On the other hand, He creates all things with a specific objective, i.e., to surrender to His Ordinances. Consequently, the principles of reward and punishment, according to obedience and disobedience to Him, will be implemented on the Hereafter. However, disbelief in the principles of reward and punishment in the Hereafter equals disbelief in Allah. This concept is clear in *Surat* Al-Kahf, when the believing man said to the one who disputed with him concerning the Hereafter:

> ﴾ Dost thou deny Him Who created thee out of

dust, then out of a sperm-drop, then fashioned thee into a man?》

(Al-Kahf: 37)

This concept is also maintained in *Surat* Ar-Ra`d when the Almighty Allah says,

《 If thou dost marvel (at their want of faith), strange is their saying: 'When we are (actually) dust, shall we indeed then be in a creation renewed?' They are those who deny their Lord! They are those round whose necks will be yokes (of servitude): they will be Companions of the Fire, to dwell therein (for aye)!》 (Ar-Ra`d: 5)

Disbelief in the Hereafter and in the Messengers of Allah entails disbelief in Allah's Omnipotence, Knowledge and Sovereignty.

In his *Musnad,* Imam Ahmad reported,

"Allah, Most High, says, 'I bestow money with

the aim of facilitating the performance of Prayer and the payment of *Zakat*. If the son of Adam had a valley of money, he would have longed for a second. If he had two valleys of money, he would have longed for a third. Nothing can meet the want of the son of Adam but dust."[1]

Money is decreed by Allah to be a means of fulfilling Man's duties towards Allah and towards His servants not as a means of joy and luxury. If money is misused, dust will be better for Man than it. However, money, knowledge and power are means towards fulfilling the objectives of creating Man. If he misuses them, he incurs nothing but a harm to himself.

In short, we may outline the attitudes of people towards the above-mentioned means in the following four classes:

1- Some people. abandon totally these means,

[1] Ahmad, Musnad, vol. 5, p. 219.

2- Others indulge in gaining them,

3- Others incur harm to themselves from it, and

4- Others make use of them to get their benefits in this world and the world to come.

The first three classes of people are in clear loss while the fourth class is the only one that will gain success and prosperity in this world and in the Hereafter.

Allah, Most High, says,

> ﴾ Those who desire the life of this present and its glitter,- to them We shall pay (the price of) their deeds therein,- without diminution. They are those for whom there is nothing in the Hereafter but the Fire: vain are the designs they frame therein, and of no effect are the deeds that they do!﴿

(Hud: 15,17)

Many of people misunderstand these *Ayat*. They think that only the one who longs solely for the pleasures of this

world deserves the threat declared in the *Ayat.* Muslim scholars, however, differ in explaining the precise meaning of these glorious *Ayat* as follows:

Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both) and some scholars said: The *Ayat* refer to a sect of people who long solely for joys of this world and disbelieve, therefore, in the Resurrection, Reward and Punishment. Accordingly, the *Ayat* concern the unbelievers only.

In addition to this, Qatadah said: Whoever dedicates his life, work and intention for the sake of this world, Allah will recompense him for his righteous deeds in this world but in the Hereafter he will have nothing for which he can be rewarded. The believer, on the contrary, will have the blessings of his righteous deeds in this world and the world to come.

The above *Ayat,* according to the aforementioned views, concern the unbeliever for Allah states,

﴾ They are those for whom there is nothing in the Hereafter but the Fire: vain are the de-

signs they frame therein, and of no effect are
the deeds that they do! ﴿

(Hud: 17)

Obviously, the believer longs for the blessings in this world and the next world whereas the unbeliever desires only this temporal world.

Ibn `Abbas, in another narration, said: These *Ayat* were revealed addressing those who face the Ka`bah in their Prayer, i.e., Muslims.

Mujahid said: The addressees of these *Ayat* are the persons who do righteous deeds to be seen by people.

Ad-Dahak commented: If a believer does righteous deeds without God-consciousness, he will have the blessings of his righteous deeds in this world only.

Al-Fura` confirmed the latter's opinion, saying: If a Muslim wishes to have the blessing of his righteous deeds in this world, he will have it without oppression.

The last opinion is the better one. Mu`awiyah

confirmed this opinion and quoted the *hadith* narrated by Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with them both) that refers to the fact that the first of people in entering Hell-fire are:

- A reciter of the Qur`an who used to recite the Glorious Qur`an that it might be said of him: He is a reciter,
- A wealthy man who used to spend his money that it might be said of him: He is open-handed, and
- A fighter who died in the battle, but he fought so that it might be said of him: He is a courageous.[1]

The most favorable people to Allah are the Prophets, the martyrs and truthful and righteous persons while the most unfavorable people to Him are those who imitate those men but seek reputation and fame among people.

Ibn Abi Ad-Dunya reported on the authority of Anas Ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) that the

[1] This hadith is narrated by Muslim.

Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said,

"On the Day of Judgment, my *Ummah* will be three classes:

a) A class of them who worships Allah for the sake of this world,

b) A class of them who worships Allah seeking reputation and fame, and

c) A class of them who worships Allah solely for His sake and wanting Paradise.

Thereupon, Allah will address the first class saying, 'By My Dignity, Glory and Place what was the target of your worship?' They will reply, 'By Your Dignity, Glory and Place, our target was the joys of the world.' Then, Allah will declare, 'Therefore, I did not accept your worship. (Oh Angels) drive them into Hell-fire.' Similarly, He will address the second class saying, 'By My Dignity, Glory and Place what was the target of your worship?' They will reply, 'By Your Dignity, Glory and Place, our

target was fame and reputation among people.' Then, Allah will declare, 'Therefore, I did not accept your worship. (Oh Angels) drive them into Hellfire.' Finally, He will address the third class saying, 'By My Dignity, Glory and Place what was the target of your worship?' They will reply, 'By Your Dignity, Glory and Place, our target was Your Sake and Paradise.' Then, Allah will declare, 'You are truthful! (Oh My angels) lead them to Paradise"[1]

Apparently, this *hadith* is authentic because it has the support of the Glorious Qur`an and the *Sunnah.*

Ibn Al-Anbari said that the Qur`anic *Ayah* "Those who desire the life of this present and its glitter,-to them We shall pay (the price of) their deeds therein, without diminution," applies to a group of Muslims who work righteous deeds but for the sake of the world. Although they are Muslims, they will be punished by Hell-fire.

The supporters of this view say that some people claim

---

(1) Reported by al-Baihaqi in Shuqab al-Iman, vol.12, p. 180. This hadith is a weak one (Daqif).

that according to the second Ayah that reads, "They are those for whom there is nothing in the Hereafter but the Fire: vain are the designs they frame therein, and of no effect are the deeds that they do," some of the believers, who do devotional acts seeking fame or worldly gains, will dwell eternally in the Hell-fire.

To refute this claim, the supporters of this view assure that the above-mentioned Qur`anic *Ayah* indicates that when one seeks the worldly pleasures by his worship, his faith will be null and void. On the Day of Judgment, such a man will meet his Lord as a disbeliever, not believer. The *Ayah,* "Vain are the designs they frame therein, and of no effect are the deeds that they do," clearly confirms this meaning.

Ibn Al-Anbari and other scholars are of the opinion that the *Ayah* bears no indication to an eternal dwelling in Hell. Yet, it indicates that those people will be punished in Hell owing to the nullification of their devotional deeds. Like those who commit major sins, the persons who seek the

pleasures of this world by their worship will only leave Hell after a long period of time.

In short, we can say that *Iman* is of two categories:

a) *Iman* that saves man from entering Hell, and

b) *Iman* that saves man from dwelling in Hell forever.

In more than one place in the Glorious Qur`an, this rule is mentioned. For example, Allah says,

> ﴾ To any that desires the tilth of the Hereafter, We give increase in his tilth; and to any that desires the tilth of this world, We grant somewhat thereof, but he has no share or lot in the Hereafter.﴿ (Al-Shura: 20)

> ﴾ If any do wish for the transitory things (of this life), We readily grant them-such things as We will, to such persons as we will: in the end have We provided Hell for them: they will burn therein, disgraced and rejected. Those who do wish for (the things of) the

Hereafter, and strive therefor with all due striving, and have faith, they are the ones whose striving will be thanked (by Allah). ﴾

(Al-Isra`: 18-19)

What is meant is that Allah, Most High, has decreed both poverty and richness to be a test and trial to examine one's gratitude, patience, truthfulness, sincerity and belief.

In the Glorious Qur`an, Allah says,

﴿ But (His plan is) to test you in what He hath given you. ﴾ (Al-Ma`dah: 48)

﴿ Do men think that they will be left alone on saying, 'We believe', and that they will not be tested? We did test those before them, and Allah will certainly know those who are true from those who are false.﴾

(Al-`Ankabut: 2-3)

﴿ Your riches and your children may be but a trial: whereas Allah, with Him is the highest

reward.﴿ (At-Taghbun: 15)

By the same token, Allah announces the fact that the world holds only an ephemeral joy and is surrounded by lusts, whereas the Hereafter is abode for the eternal reward or punishment.

In describing the lusts of the world, Allah, Most High, says,

﴾ Fair in the eyes of men is the love of things they covet: women and sons; heaped-up hoards of gold and silver; horses branded (for blood and excellence); and well-tilled land. Such are the possessions of this world's life; but with Allah is the best of the goals (to return to).﴿ (Al-`Imran: 14)

Allah, Most High, discloses the fact that these lust and joys are temporal while the joys of the Hereafter is interminable and better.

He, Most High, says,

﴾ Say: Shall I give you glad tidings of things far better than those? For the righteous are Gardens in nearness to their Lord with rivers flowing beneath; therein is their eternal home; with spouses purified and the good pleasure of Allah. For in Allah's Sight are (all) His servants. ﴿ (Al`Imran: 15)

Afterwards, He specifies the persons who deserve this joy and honor, saying,

﴾ (Namely), those who say: 'our Lord! We have indeed believed: forgive us, then, our sins and save us from the agony of the Fire; those who show patience (Firmness and self-control); who are true (in word and deed); who worship devoutly; who spend (in the way of Allah); and who pray for forgiveness in the early hours of the morning. ﴿

(Al-`Imran: 16-17)

For the righteous men, Allah promises two kinds of blessings:

a) An endless joy in Paradise, and

b) The pleasure of Allah, which is the greatest blessing.

In another *Ayah,* Almighty Allah explains the reality of the world saying,

> ﴿ Know ye (all), that the life of this world is but play and pastime, adornment and mutual boasting and multiplying, (in rivalry) among yourselves, riches and children. Here is a similitude: how rain and the growth which it brings forth, delight (the hearts of) the tillers; soon it withers; thou wilt see it grow yellow; then it becomes dry and crumbles away. ﴾

(Al-Hadid: 20)

The above similitude shows the reality of the world. Like the green plant, which soon becomes dry and crumbles away. the worldly pleasures will inevitably come

to an end.

`Abdullah (may Allah be pleased with him) said that the Prophet (pbuh) declared,

> "I am in no need of the (joys of) world. The similitude of my relation with this world is a traveler who slept at noon under a tree for a while in a summery day and then he departed from it."[1]

Sahl Ibn Sa`d (may Allah be pleased with him) said that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon) said,

> "In the Sight of Allah, if the world weighed equivalent to the wing of a gnat, He would have not allowed the unbeliever to drink even some water therein."[2]

On the authority of Al-Mustaurid that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said,

---

(1) Ahmad, Musnad, vol. 1, p. 319.
(2) At-Tirmidhi, No. 2320.

> "By Allah, this world (is so insignificant in comparison) to the Hereafter that if one of you should dip his finger pointing with his forefinger in the ocean and then he should see as to what has stuck to it."[1]

Also, Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) said that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said,

> "Cursed is the world and what it contains with the exception of the remembrance of Allah and what He loves, and the one who teaches others (useful knowledge) and the one who acquires knowledge."[2]

In the glorious *Ayah,* "Know ye (all), that the life of this world is but play and pastime, adornment and mutual boasting and multiplying, (in rivalry) among yourselves, riches and children. Here is a similitude: how rain and the growth which it brings forth, delight (the hearts of) the

---

[1] Muslim, No. 2858.
[2] At-Tirmidhi, No. 2322.

tillers; soon it withers; thou wilt see it grow yellow; then it becomes dry and crumbles away," Allah characterizes the world by the following:

a) It is mutual boasting among people regarding wealth, authority, knowledge, or asceticism. We should keep in mind that boasting is of two kinds:

   i) Abhorred boasting regarding the worldly gains and possessions, and

   ii) Recommended boasting regarding righteous deeds. This is the form of competition which is recommended in the Glorious Qur`an. Allah, Most High, says,

﴾ Be ye foremost (in seeking) forgiveness from your Lord, and a Garden (of Bliss). ﴿

(Al-Hadid: 21)

b) It is a multiplying (in rivalry) among people, riches and children. Unfortunately, some people indulge in acquiring wealth, status, fame, and even knowledge

and neglect the Hereafter. In the Glorious Qur`an, Allah, Most High, rebukes this class of people, saying,

﴾ The mutual rivalry for piling up (the good things of this world) diverts you (from the more serious things), until ye visit the graves. But nay, ye soon shall know (the reality)! Again, ye shall know!﴿

(At-Takathur: 1-4)

c) It is a temporal life that will inevitably come to an end. In the Qur`anic *Ayat,* Allah draws similitude between this terminable world and a green plant which soon becomes dry and then crumbles away.

In fact, the world is not subject to criticism in itself. It is the bridge to the Hereafter: Paradise or Hell-fire. Man's conduct, in the world, is the sole subject that can be criticized. For the believer, the world is the place of good-doing that brings him nearer to Allah. The unbeliever, however, makes use of the world in disobeying Allah and

incurring His punishment upon himself. Imam 'Au Ibn Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "This world is a place of truthfulness for the truthful one, a place of safety for the one who understands its reality and a place of prosperity for the one who inclines to the mosque.. .Then, how could any one criticize it?"

Having expounded the characteristics of the world,

Allah called the believers to vie towards good-doing and preferring the everlasting reward to the temporal joy. He, Most High, says,

﴿Be ye foremost (in seeking) forgiveness from your Lord, and a Garden (of Bliss), the width whereof is as the width of Heaven and earth, prepared for those who believe in Allah and His Messengers: that is the Grace of Allah, which He bestows on whom He pleases: and Allah is the Lord of Grace abounding.﴾

(Al-Hadid: 21)

Apparently, Paradise and Allah's forgiveness are bounties of Allah, He bestows them upon whom He wills.

In other Qur`anic *Ayat,* Allah, Most High, highlights the fact that wealth and offspring are the temporal pleasures of this world whereas the good deeds are better for the believers. Allah says,

> ﴾ Set forth for them the similitude of the life of this world: it is like the rain, which We send down from the skies: the earth's vegetation absorbs it, but soon it becomes dry stubble, which the winds do scatter: it is (only) Allah who prevails over all things. Wealth and sons are allurements of the life of this world: but the things that endure, good deeds, are best in the sight of thy Lord, as rewards, and the best as (the foundations for) hopes.﴿

(Al-Kahf: 45-46)

In another place of the Qur`an, Allah explains the reality of this world, saying,

﴾ The likeness of the life of the present world is as rain which We send down from the skies: by its mingling arises the produce of the earth which provides for men and animals: (it grows) until the earth is clad with its golden ornaments and is decked out (in beauty): the people to whom it belongs think they have all powers of disposal over it: there reaches it our Command by night or by day, and We make it like a harvest clean-mown, as if it had not flourished only the day before! Thus do We explain the signs in detail for those who reflect.﴿ (Yunus: 24)

In contrast with the ephemeral and uncertain pleasures of this material life, there is an endless joy in a higher place to which Allah is always calling. It is called *Dar As-Salam*. Allah says,

﴾ But Allah doth call to *Dar As-Salam:* He doth guide whom He pleaseth to a Way that

is straight.﴿ (Yunus: 25)

Wealth and offspring are not the means that bring one nearer to Allah. On the contrary, good deeds are the only means that bring Allah's love upon man. Allah discloses this fact, saying,

﴾ It is not your wealth nor your sons, that will bring you nearer to us in degree: but only those who believe and work righteousness.﴿

(Saba`: 37)

Even the Prophet (pbuh) was commanded by Allah not to long for the pleasure of this world since he was given the Qur`an, which is better than the ephemeral pleasures of this world. Addressing His Prophet, Allah says,

﴾ And We have bestowed upon thee the seven oft-repeated (verses) and the Grand Qur`an. Strain not thine eyes (wistfully) at what We have bestowed on certain classes of them, nor grieve over them.﴿ (Al-Hijr: 87-88)

In short, we can say that both wealth and poverty are trials. Both of patience and gratitude are prerequisites for true faith. Patience and gratitude are two inseparable characters of the Muslim. To give priority to patience or gratitude, then a separation between the two characters is a must. If it is possible, patience takes priority in situations that require it, whereas gratitude takes priority in situations that require it. In other words, we can outline this issue by saying that the souls have two powers: patience and gratitude. Accordingly, we can classify people into four classes:

1) Those who combine the two powers: those people are held to be the superior class of people in the sight of Allah,

2) Those who miss the two powers: those are the most wicked amongst people,

3, 4) Those who stick to one of the two powers more than the other: Speaking about those people, God willing, is the main theme of the following chapters.

CHAPTER TWENTY TWO

Debate about the Superiority between the Grateful Rich and the Patient Poor

This issue is a controversial among both the wealthy and the poor. Each group have its irrefutable proofs from the Glorious Qur`an, the Sunnah and the narrations of the Companions and the early Muslims.

The two parties seem to be equal since both of them have authentic proofs. Facts cannot be contradicted and evidences should be followed regardless of any other consideration. This issue has, furthermore, raised a great controversy among jurists, wealthy and poor men, scholars of *Hadith,* commentators of the Qur`an and *Sufis.*

The wisdom behind this serious debate is the general nature of this issue.

In his "Al-Tamam", Abu Al-Husain narrated that Imam Ahmad is of two opinions regarding this issue. In one narration, Imain Ahmad granted the patient poor

superiority over the grateful rich. This opinion is adopted also by Ibn Qutaibah and others. Yet, in another narration, he is of the opinion that the grateful well-to-do are better than the patient poor. This view is adopted also by Abu Ishaq Ibn Shaqla[1] and Al-Waled Al Asa`ed.

Allah, Most High, says,

﴾ Those are the ones who will be rewarded with *Al-Ghuifah* (the highest place in Heaven), because of their patient constancy. ﴿

(Al-Furqan: 75)

Muhammad Ibn `Ali Ibn Al-Husain said, *"AlGhutfah* in the verse means Paradise. The patient poor will be rewarded with Paradise because of their forbearance."

On the authority of Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (pbuh) said,

(1) Ibrahim Ibn Ahmad Ibn `Umar Abu Ishaq Ibn Shaqla Al-Bughdadi Al-Hanbali. He was well-versed in genealogy (d. 369. AH). See Siyar `Alam Al-Nubla`, vol. 16. p. 292, and Tarikh Baghdad, vol. 6,p. 17.

"O Allah! Make me live while being indigent, and make me die while being indigent! On the Day of Judgment, raise me in the company of the indigent ones!" `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) wondered, "Oh Messenger of Allah! What is the wisdom behind, this?' Thereupon, he (pbuh) disclosed, "They will enter Paradise before the well-to-do by forty years. Oh `Aishah! Don't repulse an indigent (who asks) even by giving him half a date. Oh `Aishah! Love the indigents and bring them close to you so that Allah will bring you close to Him on the Day of Judgment."[1]

However, neither the verse nor the *hadith* bears any indication to the superiority of the patient poor over grateful wealthy people.

This verse refers to numerous kinds of patience such as

(1) Reported by At-Tirmidhi (No.2352) on the authority of Anas. AtTirmidhi classified it as Hadith Gharib

patience in performing acts of worship, patience in keeping away from vice and patience in forbearing poverty and other calamities. However, if the verse refers only to patience in forbearing poverty, it will have no indication of giving priority to patience over gratefulness. Furthermore, as the Glorious Qur`an refers to the reward of the patient, it refers also to the reward of the grateful people. Allah, Most High, says,

> ﴾ And swiftly shall we reward those that (serve) us with) gratitude. ﴿
>
> (Al-`Imran: 145)

> ﴾ But Allah will swiftly reward those who (serve Him) with gratitude. ﴿
>
> (Al-`Imran: 144)

Allah, Most High, tells us that He will be pleased with grateful people. Allah's pleasure is better than His reward, Paradise. If Allah rewards the patient with *AlGhurfah,* this does not contradict rewarding the grateful person also with

Al-Ghurfah.

The *hadith* also bears no indication to the superiority of the patient poor over the grateful rich for two reasons:

First: The transmission of the *hadith* in question is not authentic for its chain of transmitters includes AlHarith Ibn Al-Nu`man, who is not regarded as an authority according to the collectors of authentic *Ahadith.* Al-Bukhari, for example, classifies any *hadith* narrated by him to be *Munkar.* Also, At-Tirmidhi classifies the *hadith* in question to be *Gharieb* (singular).

Second: The aforementioned *hadith* bears no indication to the superiority of the patient poor over the thankful well-to-do. Allah, Most High, loves the humble person due to his fear and consciousness of Allah not because of his poverty. Poverty is not a prerequisite of one's humility before Allah and wealth does not contradict it. Humility of one's heart before Allah's Glory, Pride, Names and Attributes is better than one's humility because of poverty. Undoubtedly, the patience of the one who is

able to commit sin but refrains from doing so willingly, out of fear and love for Allah is superior to the patience of the incapable poor. Although many Prophets and Messengers were given wealth and kingdoms, they were the most humble amongst people before Allah.

Imam Ahmad narrated that Abi Al-Sulail said, "In spite of his wealth and kingdom, the Prophet David (pbuh) used to sit among the indigent people and say, 'I'm indigent and live among indigent people."

Abu Al-Husain said that Abu Bazarah narrated, "The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said,

> "Surely, the poor among Muslims will enter Paradise before the rich ones by about forty years to the extent that the rich ones, on the Day of Judgment, will wish that they had been poor in the world."[1]

This *hadith* is narrated by a group of the Companions

[1] Reported by Ad-Daylami in Al-Firdaus, No. 8883.

such as Abu Hurairah, Abdullah Ibn `Umar and Jabir Ibn `Abdullah (may Allah be pleased with them). Abu Sa`id and Anas Ibn Malik also narrated it. Apparently, the *hadith* does not indicate the superiority of the poor over the rich owing to the precedence of the poor in entering Paradise.

The poor will enter Paradise before the rich because of their short-span reckoning while the just ruler and the grateful well-to-do will take longer time in reckoning.

A long time in reckoning, of course, does not refer to inferior status of the wealthy ones in Paradise.

On the Day of Judgment, the rich will wish they had been poor in the world, if it is true, due to the hardships incurred by their reckoning not because of their inferior status. The same is true concerning the just judge who will wish, on the Day of Judgment, that he had not judged between even two quarrelling persons concerning a palm-date, owing to the hardships of reckoning.

Abu Al-Hasan said, that Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both) narrated,

"Once the Prophet (pbuh) questioned his Companions, "Amongst people, who is the most charitable?" Some of the Companions replied, "A wealthy man who spends much in charity." The Prophet (pbuh) said, "Although this wealthy man is good, the most charitable amongst people is a poor believer who spends in spite of his need."[1]

However, this *hadith* has no chain of transmitters to judge its authenticity. Even if we accept the authenticity of this *hadith,* it cannot save as a proof for the superiority of the patient poor over the thankful person. The poor, which the *hadith* refers to, comprises two virtues, patience and gratitude, and therefore he deserves superiority over the other two classes. A *dirham* given in charity by such a man is better than 100,000 *dirhams* given by others. The Prophet (pbuh) said,

"A *dirham* given in charity may be more

(1) Reported by Ad-Daylami in al-Firdaus, No. 2843.

virtuous than 100,000 *dirhams.*" The Companions wondered, "Oh Messenger of Allah, how could a *dirahm* be more virtuous than 100,000?" He explained, "A man who possesses two *dirhams* and then spends one *dir-ham* in charity, his charity will be better than that of a man who possesses a huge amount of money and gives only 100,000 *dirhams* in charity.[1]

Al-Baihaqi narrated on the authority of `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) that three men came to the Prophet (pbuh). One of them said, "I had 100 oka, then I gave 10 oka in charity". Another said, "I had 100 dinars, then I gave 10 dinars in charity." The last one said, "I had 10 dinars, out of them I gave one dinar only." Thereupon the Messenger (pbuh) said,

"In reward, all of you are equal since each one

---

(1) An-Nsa`i, Sunan, vol. 5, p. 59. Narrated on the authority of Abu Huratra.

spent one tenth in charity."

Abu Sa`id Ibn Al-`Arabi narrated on the authority of Al-Hasan that a man said to 'Uthman Ibn `Affan (may Allah be pleased with him), "You, the wealthy men, precede us in virtue: you give alms, free believing slaves, perform *Hajj* and spend in the way of Allah." Whereupon `Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "Surely, you deem us fortunate and so do we. By Allah! A single *dirham* one gives in charity in spite of his need is better than 10,000 *dirhams* given in charity out of a huge amount of wealth."

Once Abu Hurairah questioned the Messenger of Allah (pbuh), "Oh Messenger of Allah! Which charity is deemed to be better?" He replied,

> "The charity of the needy, yet you should first .spend on your independents."[1]

Moreover, Abu Dharr (may Allah be pleased with him)

---

[1] Abu Dawud, Sunan, No. 1677.

said, "Oh Messenger of Allah! Which charity is regarded as better?" The Messenger (pbuh) replied,

"The charity of the needy."[1]

`Abdullah Ibn Habshi narrated that once the Prophet (pbuh) was asked,

> "Which deeds are deemed to be better?" He answered, "They are: unswerving faith, Jihad without exploitation and an acceptable *Hajj.*" Again he was asked, "Which Prayer is regarded as better?" He replied, "A long Night Prayer." He was further asked, "Which charity is more virtuous?" He explained, "The charity of the needy." Then, it was asked, "Which migration is deemed to be better?" The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) declared, "A migration from what Allah prohibits." Finally, it was questioned, "Which Jihad is considered

(1) Ahmad, Musnad, vol. 5, p. 178. Also, Ibn Hibban, Sahih, No.361.

to be more charitable?" The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said, "The Jihad of a man whose blood is shed and whose horse is wounded."[1]

These *Adhadith,* however, make obvious the fact that the charity of the needy is better than the charity of the well-to-do who spends a small amount of his huge property. According to the Divine judgment, the superiority of the actions depends on the state of the heart not the quantity or the superficial form of these actions. Therefore, motivation, sincerity and unselfishness are the main criteria in judging actions. We can imagine which is better of the following two persons: one of them gave, in charity, his sole bread to feed someone while the other gave 100,000 *dirhams* out of his huge mount of money. Undoubtedly, on the Day of Judgment, the farmer's bread will be heavier in his balance than the latter's 100,000 *dirhams.*

---

[1] An-Nisa`i, Sunan, vol. 5, p.58.

The proponents of the superiority of the patient poor over the grateful well-to-do quote a *hadith* narrated by Sulaiman Ibn `Abdul-Rahman who said that Khalid Ibn Yazid reported from his father that 'Ata' heard Abu Said Al-Khudari (may Allah be pleased with them all) say, I heard the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) supplicate,

> "Oh Allah! Decree me to die while I'm poor not wealthy!"[1]

However, this *hadith* is not authentic since the scholars are unanimously of the opinion that Khalid Ibn Yazid Ibn `Abdul-Rahman Ibn Abi Malik AdDimashqi is not truthful. Ahmad[2] declared this *hadith* to be false. Thn Ma`in and Yahya agreed with Imam Ahmad.

Having asked about this issue, Sheikh of Islam, Ibn Taymiya said, "This issue is a subject to controversy among the later scholars. Some scholars and devoted

---

(1) Ibn `Adiy, Al-Kamil, No. 3, p. 884.

(2) See Adh-Dhahabi, Al-Mizan, vol. 1, p. 645. Also, see Ibn `Adiy, Al-Kamil, No.3, p. 884.

persons hold the opinion that the grateful well-to-do man is superior than the patient poor while others hold the contrary opinion. Imam Ahmad, however, is of two different opinions regarding this issue. There is nothing narrated from the Companions and the successors on this point. A third group of scholars, moreover, is of the opinion that only through God-consciousness can the patient poor or the thankful rich be deemed as superior.

According to the author of this book, the latter's opinion is the superior one, for it has a support in the Glorious Qur`an and *Sunnah*. Allah, Most High, says,

> ﴿ And whether it be rich or poor: For Allah can best protect both..﴾ (An-Nisa`: 135)

Some Prophets and some of the early Muslims, although they were wealthy, were better than most of the poor. Similarly some of them were poor but preceded the well-to-do in virtue. However, the best among people is he who attains to the two virtues, namely patience and gratitude, such as the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), Abu

Bakr and `Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both).

Nevertheless, we should keep in mind that the virtue of richness and poverty varies according to the state of the individual. In other words, poverty may be better for some individuals whereas richness may be better for others such as in the case of health and illness. AlBaghawi narrated from the Prophet (pbuh) a *Qudsi hadith* in which Allah, Glorified and Exalted be He, says,

> "Richness improves some servants of Mine, so if I decree him to be poor, he will be corrupted. On the other hand, poverty improves some servants of Mine, so if I give him wealth, it will corrupt him. Likewise, health improves some servants of Mine, so if I decree him to be ill, it will corrupt him and illness improves some servants of Mine, so if I grant him health, it will corrupt him. I plan on behalf of My servants since I am well-

acquainted with their affairs."[1]

With regard to the above-mentioned authentic *hadith* which reads,

> "The poor among Muslims will enter Paradise before the rich," and the *hadith* that narrates the incident of the poor men whom the Prophet taught the formulae of remembering Allah after Prayer, when the rich people made remembrance of Allah by these formulae, the Prophet (pbuh) consoled the poor saying, "This is Allah's bounty and He gives it to whom He pleases."[2]

We can conclude that the poor men will precede the wealthy ones to Paradise for one specific reason. The reason is the former's short-span of time taken in reckoning as opposed to the latter's long-span of time in

---

(1) Reported by Abu Na'im in Hulya vol. 8, p. 318, and Al-Asfahani in At-Taghrib, vol. 1, pp. 112, 113.

(2) Reported by Muslim No. *595,* on the authority of Abu Hurairah.

reckoning. In spite of his later entrance to Paradise, the rich who are the most conscious of Allah will be in a higher degree in Paradise than the poor.

The same is true concerning the seven hundred persons who will enter Paradise without reckoning[1] such as `Akashah Ibn Mihsan. A man may be in a higher degree in Paradise than them but he has a longer reckoning which the former gets rid of.

Poverty, according to the Qur`an and *Sunnah,* is that state which permits man to take *Zakat* and exempts him from the obligation of giving alms.

With the passage of time, many people have come to perceive poverty as asceticism, worship, morality and, therefore, they call those who abide by these aspects as poor even if they are wealthy and vice versa. Some call this state of affairs Sufism whereas others differentiate between the poor and the sufi. Still others grant the poor superiority

---

(1) Reported by Al-Bukhari on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas, No. 6541.

over the sufi and vice versa.

The truth, here, is that we should base our conception on the Qur`an and *Sunnah* and neglect the newly invented terms and conceptions. Allah, Most High, characterizes the pious men with faith and consciousness of Allah. The more one attains to these characteristics, the more superior he will be.

CHAPTER TWENTY THREE

Textual Proofs of the Poor

Needy people argue that Allah, Glorified be He, mentions wealth and richness in the Glorious Qur`an in each of the following ways:

1- Condemning it:

Allah, Most High, says:

﴿ Nay, but man doth transgress all bounds, in that he looketh upon himself as self-sufficient.﴾ (Al-`Alaq: 6-7)

﴿ If Allah were to enlarge the provision for his servants, they would indeed transgress beyond all bounds through the earth. ﴾

(Ash-Shu`ra`: 27)

﴿ And were it not that (all) men might become one community We would provide, for every one that blasphemes against the Most

Gracious, silver roots for their houses, and (silver) doors for their houses, and couches (of silver) on which they could recline, and also adornments of gold. But all this was nothing but enjoyment of the present life: the Hereafter, in the sight of thy Lord, is for the righteous. ﴾ (Az-Zukhraf: 33-35)

﴿ Let not their wealth nor their children dazzle thee: in reality Allah's wish is to punish them with these things in this life, and that their souls may perish in their (very) denial of Allah.﴾ (At-Tawbah: 55)

﴿ Wealth and Sons are allurements of the life of this world. ﴾ (Al-Kahf: 46)

﴿ Fair in the eyes of men is the love of things they covet: Women and sons; heaped up hoards of gold and silver, ﴾

(Al-Imran: 14)

2- Announcing its **being a trial and a test:**

Allah, Glorified and Exalted be He, says,

﴿ Your riches and your children may be but a trial. ﴾ (At-Taghbun: 15)

﴿ Do they think that because We have granted them abundance of wealth and sons, We would hasten them on every good? Nay they do not perceive.﴾ (Al..Mu`minun: 55,56)

In the same way that wealth is deemed as a trial, so Allah declares, in the Qur`an, poverty to be an affliction.

He, Most High, says,

﴿ Now, as for man, when his Lord tries him, giving him honor and gifts, then saith he, (puffed up), "My Lord has honoured me.﴾

(Al-Fajr: 15)

﴿ And We test you by evil and by good, by way of trial. To Us must ye return.﴾

(Al-Anbiya`: 35)

3- Acknowledging people with the fact that wealth and offspring do not bring them nearer to their Lord:

In the Glorious Qur`an, faith and good deeds are declared to be the only means that bring people nearer to their Lord. Allah, Glorified and Exalted be He, says,

﴾ It is not your wealth nor your sons, that will bring you nearer to Us in degree: but only those who believe and work righteousness these are the ones for whom there is a multiplied reward for their deeds, while secure they (reside) in the dwellings on high! ﴿ (Saba`: 37)

4- Establishing the fact that this world, richness and wealth are the pleasures of the people who have no share in the pleasures of the Hereafter. On the other hand, the pleasures of the Hereafter are purely for those who are conscious of Allah.

Allah, Most High, says,

> ﴿ Nor strain thin eyes in longing for the things We have given for enjoyment to parties of them, the splendor of the life of this world, through which We test them: But the provision of thy Lord is better and more enduring. ﴾

(Taha: 131)

> ﴿ And on the Day that the unbelievers well be placed before the Fire, (it will be said to them) "Ye squandered your good things in the life of the world, and ye took your pleasure out of them. ﴾

(A1-Ahqaf: 20)

The Prophet (pbuh) referred to this fact when he said to `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him),

"Won't you be pleased when they[1] enjoy the

(1) The Prophet (pbuh) was referring here to the unbelievers.

pleasures of this world while we enjoy the pleasures of the Hereafter?"[1]

5- Rebuking the wealthy people who live in luxury:

Allah, Most High, says,

﴿ For that they were wont to be indulged, before that, in sinful luxury. ﴾

(AlWaqi`ah: 45)

﴿ When We decide to destroy a town, We command those among them who are given the good things of this life (to be obedient) but they continued to transgress...﴾

(Al-Isra`: 16)

﴿ Flee not, but return to the good things of this life which were given you, and to your homes, in order that ye may be called to account.﴾ (Al-Anbiya`: 13)

---

[2] Reported by Ahmad, vol. 3, pp, 139-140

6- Reproaching the lovers of wealth:

Allah, Glorified and Exalted, says,

﴾ And ye devour inheritance all with greed, and ye love wealth with inordinate love! ﴿

(Al-Fajr: 19-20)

7- Censuring those who long for wealth, richness and worldly pleasures and commending those who criticize them:

Allah, Most High, says,

﴾ So he went forth among his people in the (pride of his worldly) glitter. Said those, whose aim is the life of this world, 'Oh! That we had the like of what Qar`un has got! For he is truly a lord of mighty good fortune! But those who had been granted (true) knowledge said: "Alas for you! The reward of Allah (in the Hereafter) is best for those who believe and work righteousness: but this none shall

attain, save those who steadfastly persevere (in good). ﴿ (Al-Qasas: 79-80)

According to these Qur`anic *Ayat,* the pleasures in the Hereafter are better for the believers who do righteous deeds. Also, the *Ayat* determine the fact that no one can grasp this instruction or attain these higher degrees of Paradise except those who are patient, whom Allah describes, in the above *Ayah,* as 'the people of knowledge'.

8- Reproving ignorant people who give superiority to money over any other consideration:

Allah, Most High, says,

﴾ Their Prophet said to them; 'Allah has appointed Talut as king over you.' They said, 'How can he exercise authority over us when we are better fitted than he to exercise authority, and he is not even gifted with wealth in abundance?' He said, 'Allah has chosen him above you, and has gifted him abundantly with knowledge and bodily prowess. ﴿

(Al-Baqarah: 247)

Knowledge, accordingly, is the main virtue one can attain. Allah, Glorified and Exalted be He, stresses this fact in another *Ayah,*

> ﴿ Say: 'In the Bounty of Allah, and in His Mercy, in that let them rejoice': that is better than the (wealth) they hoard.﴾ (Yunus: 58)

The Bounty of Allah, in this *Ayah,* refers to knowledge, faith and the Glorious Qur`an.

Likewise, Allah Most High, says,

> ﴿ Is it that they would portion out the mercy of thy Lord? It is We who portion out between them their livelihood in the life of this world: and we raise some of them above others in ranks, so that some may command work from others. But the Mercy of thy Lord is better than the (wealth) which they amass.
>
> (Az-Zukhruf: 32)

9- Cautioning people that acquisitiveness, i.e., the passion for seeking an increase in wealth, position,

etc., diverts men from directing their efforts towards success in the Hereafter:

Allah, Most High, warns,

> ﴿ The mutual rivalry for piling up (the good things of this world) diverts you (from the more serious things) until ye visit the graves. But nay, you will soon know (the reality). Again, ye soon shall know!﴾

(At-Takathur: 1-4)

From these Qur`anic *Ayat,* we can conclude the following:

a) Allah, Most High, warns His servants against seeking and acquiring wealth, position etc. which may divert them from the remembrance of Allah and the Hereafter since death will come as surprise.

b) The grave is not the eternal abode but Paradise or Hell is. To make this clear, Allah refers to the graves, in the above-mentioned *Ayat,* saying, "Until ye visit the graves."

c) Allah does not specify the thing or things which people seek to indicate that what is condemned is the act of acquisition not the thing being thought. Similarly. He does not state the targets that divert people from the Hereafter to include all worldly targets whether it is wealth, position, fame, etc.

`Abdullah Ibn Al-Shukhair said, "I came to the Prophet (pbuh) while he was reciting *Surat* AtTakathur. Then he said, 'The son of Adam claims: My wealth, my wealth.' And he (the Prophet) said,

> 'Oh son of Adam, is there any part of your belongings except that which you have consumed, or you utilized, or that which you have wore and then it was worn out or you gave it as charity and sent it forward?'"[1]

Allah, Most High, threatens those who indulge in acquiring wealth or other worldly pleasures thereby neglecting the Hereafter. On the Day of Judgment, their

[1] Muslim, Sahih No. 2859.

actions will all be in vain.

On that Day, Allah will confront them with something, which they could never have expected. As one's acquisition of wealth and worldly pleasures is the root-cause of his miserliness in the world, it will be the cause of his torment in the grave and on the Day of Judgment. The more man indulges in acquiring wealth and worldly gains, the more torment and degradation he will receive in the Hereafter. At the time of death, such an unrighteous man will wish that he had done good because he will become well-acquainted with the consequences of his evil deeds. The Glorious Qur`an eloquently displays the state of such a man saying,

> ﴾ Until, when death comes to one of them, he says: 'O my Lord! Send me back (to life), in order that I may work righteousness in the things I neglected." By no means! It is but a word he says. ﴿

(Al-Mu`minun: 100, 101)

Dear Muslim brother! Contemplate his call: "O my Lord!" At that time, man will seek refuge in Allah from chastisement and then he will turn to the angels, who are commanded to bring him before his Lord, saying, "Send me back to life!" He makes the wisdom behind his call clear, i.e., to work righteousness in what he has left behind in the world of wealth, authority, power, etc. At that momentous time, a decisive reply will come to him: 'By no means, you will have no other chance.'

Due to His Ever-Generosity and Mercy, Almighty Allah discloses the fact that this miserable man asks for is nonsense since, according to the Divine wisdom and knowledge, even if this man had come back to the world, he would return to what he had accustomed to. Allah, Most High, states,

> ﴿ If thou couldst but see when they shall be made to stand by the Fire they will say: 'Would that we were but sent back! Then would we not reject the signs of our Lord, but would be amongst those who believe!'

> Yea, in their own (eyes) will become manifest what before they concealed. But if they were returned, they Would certainly relapse to the things they were forbidden for they are indeed liars.

(Al-An`am: 27-28)

Most commentators of the Glorious Qur`an tried to explain the meaning of the above-mentioned *Ayah*. However, their explanations were insufficient to convey the precise meaning of Allah's words: "Yea, in their own (eyes) will become manifest what before they conceded." They said that what will become manifest to them is torment. To escape the conflict between their opinion and the Qur`anic words: "In their own (eyes) will become manifest what before they concealed", they said, "During their lifetime, the unbelievers did not conceal their polytheism, rather they fought against truth and called for falsehood. On the Day of Judgment, they will try to conceal their disbelief as the Qur`an stated:

﴾ There will then be (left) no excuse for them but to say: 'By Allah, our Lord, we were not those who joined gods with Allah. ﴿

(Al-An`am: 23)

When they see the Hell-fire, they will know the punishment that they will face due to their polytheism; i.e., in vain they will try to conceal it."

Undoubtedly, the contradiction is apparent between their explanation and the context of the *Ayat* and Allah's words: "But if they returned, they would certainly relapse to the things they were forbidden."

Also, there is a contradiction between their explanation and the unbelievers' saying on the Day of Judgment,

﴾ By Allah, our Lord, we were not those who joined gods with Allah. ﴿

According to another group of Muslim scholars, including Az-Zajjaj, the followers of false creeds will behold what their leaders used to conceal, namely, the reality of

Resurrection.

The aforementioned explanations are inadequate. Al-Mubarid said: The Qur`anic *Ayat* refer to the fact that on the Day of Judgment the consequences of their atheism will be apparent before them although they were unaware of them in the world.

However, Al-Mubarid's explanation is strange since one can hardly accept the idea that they used to conceal their atheism because they were unaware of its consequences while they were spreading their call far and wide.

The meaning of the above-mentioned *Ayat* is that when the unbelievers stand before the Hell-fire, on the Day of Judgment, they will wish they could go back to the world so as to believe in Allah and His Messengers. Contrary to their wish, Allah will not allow them since He knows that if they were to return to the world, they would certainly relapse to the things they are forbidden. Disbelief and lying are implanted in the hearts of the unbelievers.

The unbelievers were fully aware of the truthfulness of the Messengers of Allah but they used to conceal the truth. On seeing the Hell-fire, they will wish to be returned to the world to evade the torment of Hell, not to believe in Allah and His Messenger.

Returning to the main issue, the aforementioned Qur`anic *Ayah*

﴿ Nay, were ye to know with certainty of mind, ﴾

(At-Takathur: 5)

means that if the unrighteous men who indulge in acquiring worldly pleasures and neglect the Hereafter have an unswerving faith in the Hereafter, they would not be so engrossed in seeking it. Certain knowledge and unswerving faith in the Hereafter leads man to work to attain success. However, mere knowledge of the evil consequences of something is not sufficient to keep man away from it. The more one is certain of something, the more active he will be to act accordingly.

Scholars, moreover, differ in their explanation of the significance of these two *Ayat:*

﴾ But nay, ye shall know (the reality). Again, ye soon shall know. ﴿

(At-Takathur: 3-4)

Some scholars say that the repetition of words gives assurance to the meaning.

Al-Hasan, Muqatil, Ibn `Abbas and others, in contrast, are of the opinion that repetition is not meant here since the *Ayah:* ﴾ But nay, ye shall know (the reality) ﴿, refers to the time of death while the *Ayah:* ﴾ Again, ye soon shall know, ﴿ refers to the time when man enters the graves.

This opinion has a lot of evidence to support it as follows:

1- Essentially each *Ayah* should add a new meaning.

2- This opinion corresponds to the reality: for at the time of death, man knows the consequence of his actions and when he enters the grave he will know

the reality of life in the grave.

3- `Ali Ibn Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) and some of the early Muslims interpreted the above-mentioned *Ayat* as a reference to torment in the grave.

4- This opinion is in accordance with the meaning of the two successive *Ayat* in the same Surah:

﴿ Ye shall certainly see the Hell-fire! Again, ye shall see it with certainty of sight! ﴾

Undoubtedly, each of the last two *Ayat* has a specific meaning. Therefore, the second one is modified by the Divine words: "With certainty of sight."

Allah, Most High, concludes the Surah by saying,

﴿ Then, shall ye be questioned that Day about the joy (ye indulged in!﴾

(At-Takahur: 8)

Each man, according to this *Ayah,* will be asked on the

Day of Judgment about:

a- The source of his livelihood, whether it was lawful or unlawful, and

b- Whether he was grateful to Allah or not.

Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both) narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) said,

"On the Day of Judgment, no one will be exempted from the following four questions:

1- How he led his life,

2- How he passed his time when he was a youth,

3- How he gained his property and how he spent it, and

4- What he did according to his knowledge.[1]

On the authority of Abi Barazah (may Allah be pleased

[1] Reported by At-Tirmidhi, No. 2916, on the authority of Ibn Mas`ud. According to At-Tirmidhi this hadith is Gharib.

with him) who said, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said,

> "On the Day of Judgment, no servant of Allah will be exempted from being questioned about:
>
> - How he led his life,
>
> - What he did according to his knowledge, and.
>
> How he gained his money and how he spent it.[1]

Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) said that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said,

> "The first question man will be asked on the Day of Judgment is: 'Didn't We give you a sound body and cold water?'"[2]

When the Qur`anic *Ayah:* ﴿ Then: shall ye be questioned that Day about the joy (yes indulged in),﴾ was

---

(1) Reported by At-Tirmidhi, No. 2417. This hadith is classified as Sahih by At-Tirmidhi.

(2) At-Tirmidhi.

revealed, Al-Zubait Lbn Al-`Awam (may Allah be pleased with him) asked the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) saying,

> "Oh Messenger of Allah! Which joy would we be asked about? We have nothing except palm-dates and water." Thereupon the Messenger said, "But it would be."[1]

In another narration, Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) asked the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) about the same *Ayah,* saying, "Oh Messenger of Allah! How would it be while we have nothing to feed ourselves with but palm-dates and water? Frequently, the enemy attacks us and our swords are always on our shoulders." The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) replied, "Surely, it would be."[2]

However, the Prophet's (pbuh) reply conveys one of the following two meanings:

1- The Companions (may Allah be pleased with them)

---

(1) Reported by at-Tirmidhi, No. 33564.
(2) Reported by at-Tirmidhi, No. 3354.

would sooner lead a life of luxury and joy, or

2- They will be asked about the joy even if they have nothing except water and palm-dates.

The second meaning is confirmed by the Sahih *hadith* in which the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said to his Companions, on eating ripe dates, meat and drinking cold water,

> "What you have eaten is a joy and you will be asked about it on the Day of Judgment."[1]

On the authority of Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (pbuh) said,

> "On the Day of Judgment, the servant of Allah will be brought like a young sheep to stand before his Lord, Glorified and Exalted be He. Thereupon Allah will ask him, "I have given you such and such and bestowed upon you such and such, then what have you done

[1] Reported by at-Tirmidhi in his Musnad, vol. 3, p. 338

thereby?" The servant will say, "O Lord! I collected and multiplied it. Finally I left it, therefore, would You return me back to bring it to You." Thus, if a servant did not do good, he would be cast into Hell-fire."[1]

Abu Sa`id and Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with them) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said,

"On the Day of Judgment, a servant will be asked by Allah: "Haven't I made for you the faculties of hearing and seeing, granted you wealth and offspring, subjected the crops and cattle to you, and left you to rule and patronize? Didn't you believe that you would meet this Day (of Judgment)?" He will reply, "No, I didn't" Thereupon, Allah will say, "This Day, I will forget you as you forgot Me."[2]

---

[1] At-Tirmidhi, No. 2427.
[2] At-Tirmidhi No. 2428. He classifies this hadith as Sahih.

In contrast, Al-Hasan, Muqatil, Al-Wahdi and other commentators of the Qur`an hold the opinion that the unbelievers are the addressees by the *Ayah:* "Then shall ye be questioned that Day about the joy (ye indulged in!)"

To support his stand, Al-Wahdi quoted the following narration: when the above *Ayah* was revealed, Abu `Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) questioned, "Oh Messenger of Allah! Do you fear that we will be asked about our meal, bread of barely, meat, unripe dates and sweet water, that we have had in the house of Abi Al - Haitham Ibn Al-Tihan?" The Messenger (pbuh) replied,

> "No, the address concerns the unbelievers," and then he recited, ﴿ And never do we give (such) requital except to such as are ungrateful rejecters.﴾ (Saba`: 17)"

Al-Wahdi said, "The address in *Surat* At-Takthur concerns the unbelievers since the whole Surah is threatening them. Furthermore, the context supports the view that the ungrateful unbelievers will be asked, on the

Day of Judgment, about Allah's bounties upon them with the aim of reproaching them.

Al-Hasan said, "None will be asked about the joy except the people of Hell-fire."

In fact, the above-mentioned opinion of Al-Hasan, Muqatil and Al-Wahdi has no proof in the Qur`an, the authentic *sunnah* or according to reason. On the contrary, all textual and logical evidence maintains the fact that the address in *Surat* At-Takathur is general, which embraces the believers and the unbelievers.

To support his opinion, the author of this book mentioned the following proofs:

1- On reciting *Surat* At-Takathur, the Prophet (pbuh) said,

> "The son of Adam claims: My wealth, my wealth.' And then the Prophet (pbuh) said:
>
> 'Oh son of Adam, is there anything as your belonging except that which you consumed,

which you utilized, or which you wore and then it was worn out or you gave it as charity and sent it forward?"[1]

2- On hearing the surah, the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) said, "Which joy will we be asked about! We have nothing to feed ourselves with except palm-dates and water." Thus, the Qur`an and the *Sunnah* confirm the Companions' understanding of the generality of the address of the Surah in question.

3- The above-mentioned narration of Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) is unauthentic. Consequently, it is not valid as a foundation in support of a sound opinion. Here, we quote the following authentic *hadith* to support our point of view:

Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that Allah's Messenger (pbuh) went out (of his house) one

[1] Muslim

day or one night, and there he found Abu Bakr and `Umar also. He said, "What has brought you out of your houses at this hour?" They said, "Allah's Messenger. it is hunger." Thereupon he said, "By Him in Whose Hand is my life, what has brought you out has brought me out too; get up!" They got up along with him and (all of them) came to the house of an *An-sari,* but he was not at home. When his wife see them him she said, "Most welcome!" and Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said to her, '!Where is so and so?" She said, "He has gone to get some fresh water for us." When the *Ansari* came and he saw Allah's Messenger (pbuh) and his two Companions, he said, "Praise be to Allah, no one has more honorable guests today than I (have)." He then went out and brought them a bunch of unripe dates, fresh dates and unripe dates, and said, 'Eat some of them!' He then took hold of his long knife (for slaughtering a goat or a sheep)." Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said to him, "Beware of killing a milk animal." He slaughtered a sheep for them and after they had eaten of it and dates and drank to their fill, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said to Abu Bakr and `Umar,

"By Him in Whose Hand is my life, you will certainly be questioned about this bounty on the Day of Judgment. Hunger brought you out of your house, then you did not return Until this bounty came to you."[1]

4- The Muslims' affairs, particularly at the present time, maintain the all-embracing nature of the address in *Surat* At-Takathur, for many Muslims indulge in acquiring worldly pleasures. In spite of their firm belief, the Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) were included among the addressees of this *Surah* even if some late scholars upheld a contrary view. As we admit the all-inclusive nature of Allah's command in *Surat* AlBaqarah ﴿ Oh ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you ﴾, we should admit the generality of Allah's saying,

﴿ The mutual rivalry for piling up (the good things of this world) diverts you (from the

(1) Muslim

more serious things》, in *Surat* At-Takathur.

Furthermore, the opponents of including the believers amongst the addresses in the *Surah* in question argue that the believers do not indulge in acquiring worldly pleasure and thus they are exempted from the threat in the *Surah*.

To refute the above claim, we should take note of two points:

First, man in origin is always addressed in the glorious Qur`an by condemnation:

《 For man is given to haste.》

(Al-Isra`: 11)

《 For man is (ever) niggardly. 》

(Al-Isra`: 100)

《 Truly man is, to his Lord, ungrateful. 》

(Al-`Aadiyat: 6)

《But man undertook it: he was indeed unjust and foolish.》 (Al-Ahzab: 72)

﴾Truly is man clearly unthankful.﴿

(Az-Zukhruf: 15)

Originally, man is void of virtue such as useful knowledge and righteous actions. Allah is the Only One Who grants man these virtues. Man's soul leads him to ignorance and wrong-doing. Acquiring worldly pleasures is a characteristic of the human being. If Allah does not purify man and lead him to the straight path, he will naturally indulge in seeking the temporal pleasures of this world and neglect the eternal Hereafter.

Second, with regard to the threat "But nay, ye soon shall know the reality", it includes the believers as well as the unbelievers and does not bear any indication to punishment in Hell-fire. Admittedly, all people, believers and unbelievers, will behold the Hell-Fire as Allah has taken an oath that all people will behold it. However, Al-Hasan's above-mentioned view that no one but the people of Hell-fire will be asked, on the Day of

Judgment, about the worldly joy has no source for it contradicts many authentic *Ahadith*.

Apparently, the significance and meanings of *Surat* At-Takathur are not to be restricted to the unbelievers only. This conclusion finds support in many authentic *Ahadith*. The all-embracing nature in the *Surah* is approved by the state of affairs of both Muslims and non-Muslims. Most of people not remember the Hereafter except when they breathe their last.

Due to Divine wisdom, Allah has not mentioned the items that divert Man from working for the Hereafter. By the same token, all items that divert man from his duties are included in the rule.

We should keep in mind that, Islam abhors competition in acquiring wealth or any other worldly interests whereas wealth that does not divert man from the Hereafter is not abhorred, as was the case with some Companions.

Muslims, of course, compete with each other to achieve piety, righteousness, success and prosperity. Islam praises

this form of competition. The true Muslim works hard in order to precede others to righteousness. This behavior was deeply-rooted in the Muslim society during the Prophet's lifetime. Al-Aws and Al-Khazraj, for example, used to compete with each other to gain the Prophet's pleasure. The same was true with Abu Bakr and 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both) who used to compete with each other to doing good to the extent that the latter once said,

"By Allah, I will never compete with you (Abu Bakr) to anything afterwards."[1]

As in the whole Qur`an, *Surah* At-Takathur is a glorious that entails numerous admonitions. It wages war against indulgence in the worldly pleasures and calls Muslims to be concerned about the Hereafter.

After death, as the *Surah* explains, man visits the graves to dwell for a given time and then he will depart it

---

[1] Abu Bakr was so generous and righteous that 'Umar did not precede him in doin good. (Translator)

for the eternal abode. Man, therefore, will experience three stages:

a) His lifetime,

b) His dwelling in the grave, and finally

c) His eternal abode in Paradise or Hell.

Furthermore, the proponents of the superiority of the patient poor over the grateful rich argue that Allah, Most High, protects His pious servants from the worldly interests in order to purify and honor them. In the Glorious Qur`an, Allah discloses the fact that those who are interested only in the vanities of this world may accrue something of it in this world, but that the next world will be closed to them. Wealth, according to the Qur`an, does not bring one nearer to Allah.

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) was commanded in the Qur`an not to aspire to the joys of this world that Allah had bestowed on some of His servants. Allah, Most High, addresses the Messenger and the believers saying,

﴿ Leave them (the disbelievers) alone to eat and enjoy and let false hope distract them soon for they will soon know. ﴾

(Al-Hijr: 3)

In another *Ayah* of the Qur`an, Allah rebukes the frivolous people who think of wealth and abundance of provision as honor while they perceive poverty as degeneration.

Moreover, this world will come to an end and on the Day of Judgment man will feel as if he had not tarried in the world for more than an hour in a single day.

According to the Qur`an, the life of this world is only play, a pastime, adornment, mutual boasting and multiplying in riches and children.

In addition to the aforementioned argument, the proponents of the superiority of poverty over richness mention the following *Ahadith* to support their point of view:

Imam Ahmad reported that `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) narrated, "A woman from the Ansar entered my room where she saw a cloak on the Prophet's bed. On returning to her house, she sent a woolen mattress to be put on his bed. When the Prophet (pbuh) entered my room, he asked, 'What is this?' 'So and so has sent it,' I replied. He said, 'Give it back to her!' As I wished to remain it in my room, I did not give it back to her until he commanded me three times, when he said,

> 'Oh `Ahishah! Give it back to her! By Allah, if I wish (to be a wealthy man), Allah will grant me mountains of gold and silver. Thereupon, I gave it back."

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) was offered the treasures of this world but he refused, declaring,

> "It is preferable to me to be hungry one day and to be satisfied the next. In case of hunger, I will humbly ask and remember You, Allah, whereas in case of ease, I will praise and

thank You."

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) used to ask Allah to make the provision of his household a bare sustenance.

Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) said that the Messenger of Allah said,

> "O Allah! Make the provision of Muhammad's household a bare sustenance!"[1]

Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) also reported,

> "By Him in Whose Hand is my life, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) could not afford to provide adequate food for his family to fill their bellies with bread and wheat for three days successively until he left the world."[2]

Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "I do not know that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) had ever seen

(1) Al-Bukhari and Muslim.
(2) Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

well-baked bread until he met Allah, nor had he ever seen a roasted sheep with his own eyes."[1]

Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) also said, "Allah's Messenger (pbuh) departed this world without satisfying his hunger even with barely bread."[2]

`Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) narrated, "Since his coming to Madinah, the Messenger's family did not eat their fill from the wheat bread for three successive nights until he died."[3]

Sa`d Ibn Abi Waqqas (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "I was the first man among the Arabs to cast an arrow for Allah's Cause. We used to fight in Allah's Cause while we had nothing to eat except the leaves of the *Hubla* and the *Sunuur* trees (desert trees)."[4]

'Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said, "By the

(1) Al-Bukhari.
(2) Al-Bukhari.
(3) Al-Bukhari and Muslim.
(4) Al-Bukhari.

One Who has sent Muhammad with the truth, the latter never saw a sieve nor eat baked bread made from white flour since Allah sent him as an Apostle until He took him unto Him." 'Urwa then asked, "How could you eat barley unsifted?" She replied, "We used to grind it and then blow off the husks, and after the husks flew away, we used to prepare the dough (bake) and eat it."[1]

Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) mortgaged his armor for barley grains and I had heard him, saying,

> "The household of Muhammad did not possess except a Sa` (of food grain, barley...) for both the morning and the evening meals although there were nine houses."[2]

Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that once Fatimah, the daughter of the Prophet (pbuh), brought a mouthful of bread to the Prophet (pbuh). Thereupon, the

---

(1) Ahmad and Al-Bukhari
(2) Al-Bukhari.

Prophet (pbuh) asked,

> "Oh Fatimah! What is this?" "A loaf of bread that I have baked, yet I have had no appetite to eat it alone so I brought this mouthful to you," she explained. "For your father, this is the first food he has had for three days," the Messenger replied."[1]

`Urwah said that I heard `A`isha (may Allah be pleased with her) say, "I used to see the new moon, then another new moon, and yet another new moon, i.e., three moons in two months, and fire was not kindled in the house of Allah's Messenger (pbuh)." I said, "Aunt, then what were your means of sustenance?" She said, "Dates and water."[2]

Moreover, Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that Allah's Messenger (pbuh) went out (of his house) one day or one night, and there he found Abu Bakr and 'Umar also. He said, "What has brought you out

---

[1] Reported by Ahmad, vol. 3, p. 213.
[2] Al-Bukhari, Muslim and Ahmad.

of your houses at this hour?" They said, "Allah's Messenger, it is hunger." Thereupon he said, "By Him in Whose Hand is my life, what has brought you out has brought me out too."[1]

Thus, those who argue in favor of the superiority of poverty with patience over wealth with gratefulness argue that if the latter is more virtuous, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) would have chosen it and would have asked Allah for it. Being Divinely guided, the Messenger preferred poverty to wealth.

Furthermore, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) informed us about the fact that the best of provision is that which suffices one's need moderately.

Abu Ad-Darda' (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger (pbuh) said,

> "No sun rises but two angels, sent by Allah to call with a perceptible voice so that all the

[1] Reported by Muslim.

inhabitants of earth hear except the Jinn and Men, "Oh people, flee to your Lord! Surely, a meager (provision) that suffices (one's need) is better than an abundant one that diverts one (from the Hereafter). Similarly, no sunsets but two angels sent (by Allah) to call with a perceptible voice that all the inhabitants of earth hear except the Jinn and Men, "Oh Allah! Decree abundant provision for one who spends (in your way) and corrupt the wealth of the one who withholds from spending it (in your way).""[1]

Said Ibn Malik also narrated that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said,

"Of provision, what suffices is best, and of remembrance (to Allah), the most concealed is the best"[2]

[1] Reported by Ahmad, vol. 5, p. 167.
[2] Reported by Ahmad, vol. 1, p. 172.

Obviously, two kinds of provisions are stated in the latter *hadith:*

a) The provision devoted to this life, and

b) The provision devoted to the life to come.

Regarding the former, sufficiency is recommended while for the latter, concealment is recommended. If one's worship is publicized, showing off in good works (Riya') and pride may creep into one's heart. Similarly, if one's desire for worldly provision exceeds the limits, offensiveness and diversion from the Hereafter will inevitably become part of one's characters.

Moreover, the proponents of the superiority of poverty over richness argue that Allah commends the poor person who pays less interest to worldly gains than the rich.

To support their view, they quote the following *hadith Qudsi* in which Allah says,

"Truly, of those devoted to Me, the one I most favor

is a believer who is of meager means and much given to Prayer, who has been particular in the worship of his Lord and has obeyed Him inwardly, who was obscure among people and not pointed out, and whose sustenance was just sufficient to provide for him yet he bore this patiently.

Then he (the Prophet) rapped with his hand and said:

Death will have come early to him, his mourners will have been few and his estate will have been scant."[1]

They argue further that Allah, Most High, protects His devoted servants from excessive love for this world and its joys. In this context, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said,

> "Due to His love, Allah, Glorified and Exalted be He, protects His believing servant from this world as you protect the diseased persons from eating and drinking because of your fear of harming them."[2]

---

(1) Reported by Ahmad in his Musnad, vol. 5, p. 225. Also, it is reported by At-Tirmidhi, No. 2347.

(2) Reported by Ahmad, vol. 5, p. 428.

Unlike the believers, the unbelievers and wicked persons may be granted, by Allah's will, worldly pleasures in abundance, which encourages them in sin and transgression. So when they are finally seized by the wrath of Allah, they are caught suddenly and utterly unprepared, as it were, red handed while engrossed in disbelief, a life of impiety and open revolt against their Lord."[1]

The nearest people to the Prophet (pbuh) on the Day of Judgment are those who have been indifferent to worldly interests and have not bothered about them. Irak Ibn Malik quoted Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with them) to have said, "On the Day of Judgment, I will be the nearest one of you to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) since I have heard him saying,

> 'On the Day of Judgment, the nearest one of you to me is the one who departs this world in the same state as I have departed him (after his demise). By Allah! In this world, there is

[1] Reported by Ahmad, vol. 5, p. 145.

no one but longs for some worldly interests, while I don't."[1]

Moreover, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) commended the patient man, whose sustenance is just sufficient to provide for him, saying,

"May *Tuba* be decreed for the one who is guided to Islam and whose sustenance is just sufficient to provide for him but he keeps himself satisfied with Allah's Destiny."[2]

In another narration, 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both) reported the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) to have said,

"Prosperous indeed is the one who embraces Islam and satisfies himself with Allah's bounties although his sustenance is just sufficient to provide for him."[3]

---

(1) Ahmad, Al-Zuhd, p. 147.
(2) Ahmad, Musnad, vol. 6, p. 19.
(3) Ahmad, Musnad, vol. 2, p. 168.

The supporters of the superiority of poverty over wealth say that on the Day of Judgment the poor will be privileged, since the more needy one is, the lighter the hardships he faces in the Day of Reckoning *(Hisab)*.

Al-Hasan narrated that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said,

> "A servant of Allah will be exempted from being asked about the following three:
>
> a) A shade where he takes rest,
>
> b) A mouthful he eats to live, and
>
> c) A cloth he wears to cover his private parts."

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) announced that patience with poverty is better than gratefulness with wealth on the occasion when he asked *Ahlu Al-Suffa,*[1]

"Oh *Ahlu Al-Suffa,* how are you?" "Fine," they replied. He

---

[1] Ahlu Al-Suffa were a group of poor Muslims who lived in the Mosque of the Prophet (pbuh) during the latter's lifetime. (Translator).

asked further, "For you, is this day better or a day in which one of you will wear a garment when he goes out in the morning and wear another garment when he returns back to his home by night, and in that day one of you will cover his house with curtains like that of the Ka`bah.[1]" They answered, "Oh Allah's Prophet that day will be better (than the present-day) since we will be grateful and will thank Allah for his bounties." "Nay," the Messenger (pbuh) declared and added, "The present-day is better for you."[2]

Those who argue in favor of the superiority of poverty over wealth say. that among the disadvantages of wealth is its being a trial. Allah, Most High, says,

﴿ Your riches and your children may be but a trial. ﴾ (At-Taghabun: 15)

Ka`b Ibn `Iyad narrated: I heard the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) say,

---

(1) The Prophet (pbuh) referred to the luxurious life they will lead on that day. (Translator).

(2) Reported by Ahmad.

"Each nation should face a trial and money is the decreed trial to my nation."[1]

"Wealth calls to Hell while poverty calls to Paradise", the proponents of this view state quoting the following *hadith:* "Once the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) was sitting with his Companions where a poor man came and sat beside a wealthy one. The well-to-do man took up his clothes (fearing that the poor one would touch them). Thereupon, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) addressed the well-to-do man, saying,

> "Do you fear that your wealth may infect him or his poverty may infect you." The wealthy man said, "Oh Messenger of Allah! Does wealth lead to harm." "Yes", the Prophet (pbuh) said, adding, "Your wealth calls you to Hell while his poverty calls him to Paradise." The wealthy man asked, "How can I save myself from this?" the Messenger (pbuh)

(1) At-Tirmidhi.

> responded, "You should console him." The man said, "I will do." Thereupon, the poor man said, "I'm in no need of this." Then the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) commented, "Ask Allah to forgive you and supplicate on behalf of your brother"[1]

Also, among the disadvantages of wealth is that it entails many rights that one may not fulfill.

Abu Umamah (may Allah be pleased with him) reported Allah's Messenger (pbuh) as saying,

> "O son of Adam, it is better for you, if you spend your surplus (wealth), but if you withhold it, it is evil for you. There is (however) no reproach on you (if you withhold means that are necessary) for living. And begin (charity) with your dependents; and the upper (giving) hand is better than the lower (receiv-

[1] Reported At-Tirmidi, No. 2341.

ing) hand."[1]

Strongly speaking, the proponents of this view say that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) was anxious about his nation because of wealth not poverty. `Amar Ibn `Awf, one of those who fought at Badr[2] in the company of the Prophet (pbuh), narrated, "Allah's Messenger (pbuh) sent Abu `Ubaidah Ibn Al-Jarrah to Bahrain to bring *Jizyyah(poll* tax) from its people, for Allah's Messenger (pbuh) had made a peace treaty with the people of Bahrain and appointed Al-`Ala Ibn AlHadrami as their ruler. So Abu `Ubaidah arrived with money from Bahrain. When the *Ansar* heard of the arrival of Abu `Ubaidah, (the next day) they offered Morning Prayer with the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) and when they finished the Prayer, the Prophet (pbuh) went out. However, they presented themselves before him. On seeing them, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh)

---

(1) Muslim.

(2) Badr was the first battle between Muslims and the unbelievers and it was a great victory for Muslims. It was in the second year after Higrah. (Translator).

smiled and said, "I think you have heard that `Ubaidah has brought something from Bahrain?" "Indeed," they replied adding, "It is so, Oh Messenger of Allah!" He said,

> "Be happy, and hope for what pleases you. By Allah, I am not afraid that you will be poor, but I fear that worldly wealth will be bestowed upon you as it was bestowed upon those who were before you (the previous nations). So you will compete amongst yourselves for it, as they competed for it, and it will destroy you as it destroyed them."[1]

Furthermore, the Prophet (pbuh) declared the superiority of the poor over the well-to-do as narrated Sahl Ibn Sa`d (may Allah be pleased with him), saying,

"A man passed by the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) when the latter asked (his Companions), 'What do you say about this (man)?' They replied, 'If he asks for a lady's hand, he ought to be given her in marriage; and if he intercedes (for

(1) Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

someone), his intercession should be accepted; and if he speaks, he should be listened to.' The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) kept silent and then a man from among the poor Muslims passed by, and the Messenger of Allah asked (them), 'What do you say about this man'?' They explained, 'If he asks for a lady's hand in marriage, he will be refused; and if he intercedes (for someone), his intercession should not be accepted; and if he speaks, he should not be listened to.' Thereupon, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) proclaimed, 'The latter (the poor one) is better than so many of the first (the well-to-do) as filling the earth.'"[1]

Among the privileges of the poor is that they will precede the wealthy men to Paradise. According to some narrations, such as that narrated by `Abdullah Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both) in *Sahih* Muslim and Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) in At-Tirmidhi, the poor will precede the rich by forty years while in other

[1] Al-Bukhari.

narrations, such as that reported by Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) in AtTirmidhi, the poor will precede the wealthy to Paradise by five hundred years.

However, there is no contradiction between the above-mentioned narrations since precedence is of various degrees, i.e., .some of the poor will precede the rich by forty years while others will precede them by five hundred years.

Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger (pbuh) said,

> "The first three men who will enter Paradise and the first three who will enter Hell have been shown to me. With regards to the first three who will enter Paradise they are:
>
> a) A martyr,
>
> b) An obedient slave to Allah, and
>
> c) A modest poor man who maintains his off-springs.

While the first three men who will enter Hell are:

a) A tyrannical ruler,
b) A wealthy man who does not fulfill his financial duties, and
c) A proud poor person."[1]

Furthermore, the proponents of this view say that among the privileges of the poor is that the majority of the people of Paradise will be from the poor whereas the majority of the people of Hell will be from the wealthy men. 'Abdullah Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both) said that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said,

> "I have seen Paradise where I saw the majority of its inhabitants from the poor, while I have seen the Hell-fire, where I saw the majority of its inhabitants from among the well-to-do and women.[2]"[3]

---

[1] Reported by At-Tirmidhi.

[2] Most of women will be punished in Hell because of their tongues and ingratitude to their husbands.

[3] Ahmad and At-Tirmidhi.

Also, they argue that on the Day of Judgment, each person will wish if he had been poor in the world. Anas Ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said,

> "On the Day of Judgment, no wealthy or poor man will but wish that he had been provided with just a meager sustenance in the world."[1]

Moreover, the poor will have full compensation in the Hereafter whereas the wealthy man receives some of his reward in this world, namely, his wealth. To explain this we quote the following *ahadith:*

`Abdullah Ibn `Amr (may Allah be pleased with them both) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) have said,

> "A troop of soldiers who fight in the way of Allah and get their share of the booty receive

(1) Repoted by Muslim, No. 2737.

in advance two-thirds of their reward and only one-third will remain (to their credit) for the Hereafter. If they do not receive any booty, they will get their full reward (in the Hereafter)."[1]

Khabbab (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated, "We emigrated with the Prophet (pbuh) seeking Allah's reward, and so our reward was then surely kept by Allah. Some of us died and they did not take anything from their rewards in this world, and amongst them was Mus`ab Ibn `Umair (may Allah be pleased with him); and the others were those who received their rewards. Mus`ab was martyred on the Day of Uhud[2] and we could find nothing except his garment to shroud him in. And when we covered his head, his feet became bare and vice versa. So

---

(1) Muslim.

(2) Uhud Was the second battle between Muslims and the unbeliever and in which Muslims were defeated. It was in the third year after Higrah. Uhud, originally, is a name of the well-known mount on which this battle took place. (Translator)

the Prophet (pbuh) ordered us to cover his head only and to put *Idhkhir* (a kind of shrub) over his feet."[1]

Qays Ibn Abu Hazim narrated, "We went to pay a visit to Khabbab (who was sick) and he had been cauterized at seven places in his body. He said, 'Our Companions who died, left this world without having their rewards reduced though enjoying the pleasures of this life, but we have got (so much) wealth that we find no way to spend it except on the construction of buildings.'"[2]

Ibrahim Ibn `Abdur-Rahman Ibn `Awf (may Allah be pleased with them both) narrated, "A meal was brought to `Abdur-Rahman Ibn `Awf (may Allah be pleased with him) and he was fasting. He said, `Mus`ab Ibn `Umair (may Allah be pleased with him) was martyred and was better than me and he was shrouded in his garment and when his head was covered with it, his legs became bare, and when his legs were covered, his head got uncovered. Hamzah

(1) Al-Bukhari and Muslim.
(2) Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

was martyred and was better than me. Now the worldly gifts have been bestowed upon us. No doubt I fear that the rewards of my deeds might have been given earlier in this world.' Then he shed tears and left his food."

The Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) understood this fact very well. `Umar Ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him), for example, burst into tears when someone brought to him the treasures of Khausru, after the battle of Al-Qadisiah. Thereupon, `AbdurRahman Ibn `Awf (may Allah be pleased with him) wondered, "Oh Commander of the Faithful, how do you grieve on a day of victory and gratefulness!" `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) disclosed, "That is because the worldly pleasures and interests are the root-cause of enmity and hatred amongst people."

The supporters of this view argue that wealth may be the cause of one's trial in the Hereafter. To support their point of view, they quote the following *Ahadith:*

Abu Dharr (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated,

"Once I went out at night and found Allah's Messenger (pbuh) walking alone, and I thought that perhaps he would dislike it if someone should accompany him. So I walked in the shade, away from the moonlight, but the Prophet looked behind and saw me and said, "Who is that?" I replied, "Abu Dharr, let Allah get me sacrificed for you!" He said,

> "Oh Abu Dharr, come here!" So I accompanied him for a while and then he said, "The rich are in fact the poor (little rewarded) on the Day of Judgment except he whom Allah gives wealth which he in turn gives (in charity) to his right, left, front and back, and does good deeds with it."[1]

Moreover, Anas Ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said,

> "One amongst the denizens of the Hell-fire who had led a life of ease and plenty amongst

[1] Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

the people of the world would be made to dip in the Fire only once on the Day of Judgment and then it would be said to him, 'Oh son of Adam, did you find any comfort, did you happen to get any material blessing?' He would say, 'By Allah, no, my Lord.' And then a person from amongst the people of the world, who had led the most miserable life (in the world), from the dwellers of Paradise, and he would be made to dip once in Paradise and it would be said to him, 'Oh son of Adam, did you face any hardship? Or did any distress fall to your lot? And he would say, 'By Allah, no, Oh my Lord, never did I face any hardship or experience any distress.'"[1]

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) regarded the one who excessively loves this world as a slave of it. Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet

[1] Muslim.

said,

> "Perish the slave of the *Dinar, Dirham, Qatifa* (thick soft cloth), and *Khamisah* (a garment), for if he is given, he is pleased; otherwise he is dissatisfied."[1]

According to the early pious Muslims, the proponents of this view say, excessive love for this world is the essence of error and corruption of religion for the following reasons:

1- Loving and desiring what Allah despises of the worldly life is a major sin.

2- Allah has proclaimed His curse on and dislike of this worldly life. Therefore, whoever loves what Allah curses and dislikes incurs Allah s wrath upon himself.

3- Man should long for prosperity and success in the Hereafter.

To achieve this end, he should make use of this world

---

[1] Al-Bukhari.

and do righteous deeds so as to bring himself closer to Allah. Then, only people of unsound mind would long for this worldly life and ignore the Hereafter. The Glorious Qur`an highlights this fact in more than one place, Allah, Most High, says,

> ﴾ Those who desire the life of the present and its glitter, to them We shall pay (the price of) their deeds therein, without diminution. They are those for whom there is nothing in the Hereafter but the fire: vain are the designs they frame therein, and of no effect are the deeds that they do!﴿

(Hud: 15, 16)

> ﴾ If any do wish for the transitory things (of this life), we readily grant them such things as We will: in the end have We provided Hell for them: they will burn therein, disgraced and rejected. ﴿

(Al-`Isra`: 18)

﴾ To any that desires the tilth of the Hereafter, We give increase in his tilth. (On the other hand) whoever desires the tilth of this world, We grant some what thereof, but he has no share or lot in the Hereafter.﴿

(Ash-Shura: 20)

The *Sunnah* supports this fact in many *Ahadith*. Muslim, for example, narrated in his *Sahih* the *hadith* which indicates that the first of people who will enter Hell are:

a) A fighter,

b) An alms-giver, and

c) A reciter of the Qur`an.

The simple reason for their wretchedness and torment in the Hereafter is that they used to do righteous actions seeking fame and reputation among people.

Moreover, Abu Umamah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that a man came to the Prophet (pbuh) and

asked, "Oh Messenger of Allah! What do you say about a man who taught seeking Allah's reward as well as reputation among people?" The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) replied,

> "He will have nothing (from Allah)." The man repeated the same question three times whereas the Messenger gave him the same reply."[1]

'Ubadah Ibn As-Samit (may Allah be pleased with him) also narrated that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said,

"Whoever fights in a Holy war but seeks (a worldly benefit) even a camel's hold, he will have (in reward) what he longs for."[2]

4- Loving this worldly life hinders man from doing righteous deeds, which are the only things that will avail him in the Hereafter. The more one indulges in loving the worldly life, the more he refrains from doing

(1) Ari-Nasa'i, Sunan.
(2) Ahmad, Musnad. Also, An-Nasa'i, Sunan.

righteous deeds. A *hadith* reads,

"Whoever adores this worldly life, he will bring himself harm in the Hereafter. And, whoever loves the Hereafter, he will bring himself harm in this world. Therefore, you should prefer the eternal life to the vanishing one."[1]

5- Loving this world will turn it to be a man's biggest concern. Anas Ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said,

"Whoever makes the Hereafter his most concern, Allah will cast satisfaction into his heart, put his affairs in order, and his predetermined share of this world will come to him in full.

In contrast, whoever makes this world his biggest concern, Allah will cast dissatisfaction into his heart, scatter his affairs, and nothing but his predetermined share of this world will

(1) Ahmad, Musnad, vol. 4, p. 12.

come to him."[1]

6- A lover of this world will face grievous torment and affliction in the following three ways:

I- In this world: A lover of this world will face hardships and tribulations when he struggles to gain it.

II- In the grave: After his demise, a lover of the world will grieve because of missing his beloved world and meeting an unbearable torment.

III- In the Hereafter: On the Day of Judgment such a lover of the worldly life will have no abode except in Hell-fire.

Allah, Most High, says,

﴿ Let not their wealth nor their children dazzle thee: in reality Allah's wish is to punish them with these things in this life, and that their souls may perish in their (very) denial of

---

[1] Reported by At-Tirmidhi, No. 2465.

Allah.

7- Only men of unsound mind could adore and prefer this world to the Hereafter. By doing so, they prefer myth to truth and temporal shade to the eternal joy.

Yunus Ibn `Abd Al-`Ala said, "This worldly life is like a sleeper who sees in a vision what he likes as well as what he dislikes and suddenly he rises."

The author of the book states, "The world is like the shade which gradually fades although people perceive it as a reality. Also, it is like a mirage in sandy deserts, which the man parched with thirst mistakes for water; until when he comes up to it, he finds it to be nothing: but he finds Allah there, and Allah will pay him his account: and Allah is Swift in taking account."

Describing the position of this world, `Ali Ibn Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "In this world the man of good health will soon be aged while the ill one will regret; the poor will grieve while the well-to-do will face trials; and its lawfulness entails *Hisab,* while its prohibition

lead to Hell-fire."

Likewise, Ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "This world is the home of the homeless one, the wealth of the wreathless one, and there is no one except the mindless who amasses it."

Finally, Jesus (pbuh) instructed, "Don't worship this world, otherwise it will enslave you. You should pass by it, not adorn it. Know well that adornment of this world is the essence of every error. A single lust may make men grieve forever. The following three will afflict the lover of this world:

a) An endless grief,

b) An everlasting penury, and

c) An unattained objective."

Examples of Life

Example one: Man is of three conditions: a condition in which he is nothing, and that is the condition preceding his existence. Another condition takes place between the moment of his death up to absolute eternality. His soul still exists, for after it leaves the body, it goes either to the Paradise or to the Fire. Then it is brought back to his body in order to receive his account and to abide in one of the two homes for good. Between these two conditions there is a middle one. It starts from the moment he exists until the moment he dies and it represents the days of his life time. If he counts how long his life is in comparison with either of the other two conditions, he will find it equal to not one moment of the time of the world. Whoever looks at the world this way will never resort to it, nor will he care how he spends his days in it, suffering hardships or enjoying its pleasure. Having known this fact, the Prophet (may the prayers and peace of Allah be upon him) never cared about the world, he said:

> "I have nothing to do with this world. My similitude and its is as the similitude of a

traveler, who spent the noon time under the shade of a tree, then he left it and went away."

He also said:

"The position of the World in the Hereafter is like (the quantity of water) that one of you gets when he puts his finger in the sea; so let him see (the value of) what he has got."

Jesus (peace be upon him) referred to the same point saying: "The world is like a bridge; so cross it but do not populate it." This is a sound example, for life is a bridge to the Hereafter; the cradle is the first part of the bridge, and the grave is its second part at the end of it. Some people have crossed half of the bridge, some others have crossed two thirds of it, and some others still have only one step before the end although they do not know this. In all events, people must cross it Hence, it is very foolish of him who should stay on the bridge to decorate it with different forms of ornaments, while he is entitled to pass over it steadily.

Example two: The worldly lusts resemble the position of delicious food in the stomach. By death, man will have

found that the worldly lusts are most despised, and ugly just as delicious food when it has been digested. The more delicious, meaty and sweet food is, the more squalid excrement it produces. By the same token, every lust that which is nearer to and more influential on the heart is more harmful to man when dying. Moreover, it is like the grief afflicted as a result of losing one's close beloved. Such grief is always as strong as how much one loved his intimate companion.

In *Musnad,* The Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said to Ad-Dahhak Ibn Sufiyan:

> "Is it not that you get your food served with salt and spice then you drink water and milk (after eating)? He said:" Yes. The Prophet said: (Where does it go to?) Ad-Dhhak said: To the place you know.) Thereupon the Prophet said:" Verily Allah has set the similitude of the world to be like the (excrement) the children of Adam produce." One of the Early Muslims said to his companions: Come with me to show you what

the world is. He then accompanied them to a dunghill and said, "Look at their fruits, chickens, honey and fats!"

Example three: This is an example of the world and its people in their distractedness by its pleasure that they become oblivious or the Hereafter, and of their regrets afterwards. The similitude of its people in their inadvertence is like the folk who traveled on a ship. The ship landed at an island. Its captain ordered them to go and relieve themselves so quickly lest they should lose the ship. They went around the island. Some of them finished and came quickly straight to the ship. These found the ship empty and rested in the best and most comfortable places. Some others stood for a while in the island to have a look at its flowers and wondrous lights, listening to the melodies of its birds, and enjoying its beautiful stones. Suddenly they remembered that they might have missed the ship, and the danger of such loss. They returned quickly but found only narrow places. A third group eagerly collected as much as they could of those beautiful stones and wondrous flowers. However, when they came back to the ship, they found only narrow places, which grew narrower by their loads,

which overburdened them. As a result, and because they found no place to rest their leads, they had to bear them on their shoulders with bitter regret. The flowers wilted, and began to have a rotten scent, which harmed their collectors. Another group penetrated deep into the island and forgot the ship. They did not hear the captain calling out to the travelers when the ship was about to leave. This was because this group was busy with their amusement, eating fruits, smelling flowers and enjoying the beauty of the stones. In their folly, they were always afraid that a lion might suddenly attack them, that a branch might wound them, that a thorn of the island might tear their clothes and violate their privates, or of a strenuous horrible sound. Some of, these folk had caught the ship but found it full and they were left behind and died on the coast. Some others were so busy with amusement, that they were preyed upon by wild animals and bitten by snakes. Some others died because they had lost their way back. This is the example of the people of the world who are so preoccupied with their worldly affairs that they are oblivious of their destiny in the Hereafter.. How foolish it is of those who have minds to let themselves be seduced by

perishable shells and plants, that they stumble on their way to salvation and lose it.

Example four: For people's deception with the world and the weakness of their belief in the Hereafter Ibn Abud-Duniya reported that Al-Hasan said: someone told me that Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said to his Companions, "My similitude, yours and that of the world is as the similitude of the folk who entered a sandy desert. They went on until they did not know whether the distance they had finished was farther than the rest of the desert. By then, they had run out of the stored supplies, that they were upset and stopped in the middle of the desert. They became sure that death was approaching. Meanwhile, a wet-headed man in a cloak appeared in the distance. They said, "He must be coming from the countryside not too far away." When he reached them the man said, "0 people! What is the matter with you?" They said, "It is what you may observe right here." He said," What will you give me in reward if I guide you to gratifying water and green gardens?" They said, "We shall do everything you ask for." Thereupon the man said, Give me your promise and covenant (swearing) by Allah." The Prophet said, "The folk gave him their promise

and covenant (swearing) by Allah that they would do everything he would ask for. Then he guided them to the water and the green gardens." The Prophet said, "The man stayed with them for some time until he said, "O people! Let us go off." They asked, Where to?" He said, To another zone of water and gardens." The Prophet said, "The majority of the folk said, "By Allah, we found this place after we had thought we would never do, and what shall we do with a better living?" The Prophet said, "The minority of the folk said, "Did you not give the man your promise and covenant (swearing) by Allah that you would do everything he asks, and he was truthful with you? Then, by Allah, he will be truthful with you this time too." Soon left the man with those who followed him, while the rest of them stayed. Their enemy took them suddenly, and they were captured or executed."

Example five: The world and its people as referred to in some Prophetic *Hadith* that the world and its people are like the shade of a tree under which a man got a shade when traveling to Allah on a hot summer day, then he left in and went away. Now contemplate how beautiful and real this example is. The world is as bloomy as a green tree.

Being steadily but gradually perishable, the world resembles the condition of the shade and the servant traveling to his Lord. To clarify, when the person traveling on a hot summer day sees a tree, he is not recommended to raise a building below it, nor is he advised to make it his home. Rather, he should sit under its shade for only the time needed, for once he overspends time under it, he loses his caravan.

Example six: This is an example also referred to by a Prophetic *Hadith* indicating that the world is like the putting of one's finger in the sea; what the finger is supposed to obtain from the sea represents the similitude of the world in comparison with the Hereafter. This is also one of the best examples, since the worldly life is mortal, even if it was of longer duration, but the Hereafter is certainly immortal. As a matter of fact, the Hereafter has no end, and whatever are things restricted in it cannot be remotely counted in comparison to the unrestricted ones. Even though it is presumed that the heavens and the earth are full of mustards, and a bird comes every thousand years to transfer a mustard of them, all the mustards will finish, while the Hereafter will stay intact. So the proportion of

the world as compared with the Hereafter in this example is like the proportion of one mustard when compared with the number of those mustards. By the same token, if the sea is followed by further seven seas, and the trees of the earth were all pens with which the Words of Allah could be written down, both the seas and pens will perish, while Allah's Words will never perish. This is because they have no start, nor do they have a finish, whereas the seas and pens are finite.

Imam Ahmad and others said, "Allah speaks as long as He wants to, as His Sublime Perfection requires this. Yet His Perfection is a characteristic of His Self, thus He is the Most Perfect. No doubt, he who is able to speak is more perfect than the one who cannot, and He (Exalted be He) never gets exhausted, tired or bored because of speaking. He creates and manages His creatures with His Words. It is His Words with which He brings His creatures and orders into existence. This is what is meant by His sovereignty, lordship and divinity. He is never to be other than the Lord, the King, the God, like whom there is no other. What this means is that the world is only a breath of those of the Hereafter and an hour for its time.

Example seven: This example is mentioned in a part of *Hadith* whose authenticity is unanimously agreed upon, and which was narrated on the authority of Abu Sa`id Al-Khudri (may Allah be pleased with him), who said, "Once the Prophet kept silent then he said,

> "What have you said?" He said, "O Messenger of Allah! Does good bring evil? The Prophet (pbuh) said, "Verily, good brings only good, but some of what spring grows[1] kills when it causes overeating, or it makes (the eater) close to (death). But this does not happen to the grass-eater that eats until her stomach has been filled. After that she kneels down in the Sun, and easily evacuates the bowels and urinates. Then she chews the cud and goes back to eat again. So whoever takes money rightly, Allah blesses it for him; but whoever takes money wrongly, his likeness is the likeness of the one

---

(1) i.e. Plants and such like that which grows in spring. (Translator)

who eats but without satisfaction.[1]

Thus the Prophet (pbuh) told that he was afraid for his people of the worldly life. He named it a flower to give it the similitude of the flower in its good scent, beauty and short lifetime, and that there will come after it a fruit, which is better and lasts longer.

The Prophet's saying, "Some of what spring grows kills when it causes overeating, or it brings (the eater) close to (death)." is one of the best examples involving a warning against the world, indulging in it and enjoying its pleasure. It indicates that some sheep may like the plants of spring and overeat from them, so that overeating comes to kill them. When Al-Harith Ibn Mazin `Amr Ibn Tamim fell ill of dyspepsia in a journey and died, he was named Al-Habati, meaning man of dyspepsia. Similarly, those who collect money voraciously may be killed by their voracity. If it does not kill them, it brings them close to death. Many of the money collectors were killed by their money, for they collected it voraciously, and others needed it but found no way to get it but by killing its owners, or at least

(1) Al-Bukhari (6427), and Muslim (1052)

humiliating and suppressing them-- deed which is similar to killing.

His saying, "But this does not happen to the sheep..." is an example for whosoever takes from the world only his needs. The Prophet (pbuh) gave him the similitude of the sheep who eats from plants only what she needs, "She eats until her stomach has been filled." And in another narration he said, "Until its stomach has expanded." Actually, the stomach always expands when it is full of food.

In his saying, "She kneels down in the sun, and easily evacuates the bowels and urinates", there are three benefits:

First, When she takes the food needed from the pasture, she leaves it to sit in the sun in order to digest what she has eaten.

Second, She pays no attention to voracious overeating, but rather cares for what benefits her, namely sitting in the sun whose heat helps her digest and evacuate the food she has eaten.

Third, When she evacuates the bowels and urinates,

she relieves herself. If the digested food stays in her bowels, surely it will kill her. By the same token, the money collector should treat his money in the same way the sheep deals with her food so as to get its benefit.

This *Hadith* being discussed started with, "The similitude of the one who voraciously and cautiously collect the worldly (pleasure).." Connecting it with the part we have quoted, we find that the status of such a one resembles the status of an animal, who overeats voraciously, that overeating kills him, or at least brings him close to death. Thus the voracious and close man either dies or comes near to death just as when spring grows different kinds of legumes ad grass, then comes the animal and overeats until his stomach swells because of overfilling. Consequently, his intestines cleave and get ruined. This is typically the destiny of the one who collects the unlawful worldly pleasures, and deals with the world improperly.

The end of the *Hadith* also presented an example of the moderate man. His status is like that of the sheep that gets the benefit of the plant she eats, paying no attention to

voracious overeating; she only eats what she needs. Thus the moderate man takes what he needs and keeps only what benefits him. The Prophet also cited the example of the urine and excrement of the sheep for the moderate man's giving out of the money in charity. Since hoarding money is harmful to him, he escapes from the bad consequences of collecting it by taking out of it only what he needs, and escapes from the consequence of hoarding it by giving out of it in charity, just as the sheep that escapes from death by evacuating and urinating.

This *Hadith* also called for keeping to the moderate way between the killing voracity, and ultimate avoidance, which leads to destruction. The report, moreover, directed those who collect money exuberantly to that which maintains the strength and health of both the body and the heart, namely giving cut on charity, as a means to avoid its hoarding, which only brings harm to him. May Allah guide us all to what is right.

Example eight: `Amr Ibn Shu`ayb narrated that Maymounah (may Allah be pleased with her) said, The Messenger of Allah said to `Amr Ibn Al-`as,

"The world is green and sweet. So, he who fears Allah in it and is righteous (will get its benefit), otherwise he will be like the one who eats without gratification. And the distance between (these two types of) people is like this distance between two planets, one of which rises in the east, and the other sets in the west."[1]

Thus the Prophet described the world as green to refer that the eyes like it, and described it as sweet to refer that the heart elucidates it. With such greenness and sweetness, it was beautified and endeared to mankind, particularly because they are created in and out of it.

The Prophet divided people of the world into two categories: First: those who are righteous and conscious of Allah. Their righteousness and consciousness of Allah against voracious indulging in the pleasures of the world, collecting them unlawfully and using them improperly

---

(1) Abu Ya`al narrated it in his Musnad (7099), and At-Tabarai narrated it briefly (24/24). In Mujamma' az-Zawa'id (10/246), Al-Haythami said, Al-Muthanna Ibn As-Sabah is one of its transmitters, and he is weak.

protect these people. If they are not righteous and conscious of Allah, they use their time and effort in tracing pleasures, and become like those who eat without gratification. These represent the second category. This is one of the best examples, for people must eat to maintain their health and strength, according to their needs, not for the sake of eating itself.

Whoever eats for the sake of eating and not for maintaining his health will never feel satisfied. For this reason Imam Ahmad said, "A little bit of the worldly pleasure satisfies, but much of it never gratifies." Back to the text of the *Hadith,* we find that the Prophet (pbuh) spoke of the dissimilarity between people as regards the two degrees- i.e. the degree of their consciousness of Allah and righteousness and that of eating and voracity and that the difference between the two categories is as far as the distance between two planets, one of which sets in the west and the other which rises in the east. Between the two categories, there are several other degrees.

Example nine: It is the example narrated on the authority of al-Mustawrid Ibn Shaddad, who said, I was

among the troop (of people) who stopped with the Prophet (pbuh) beside the (dead body of) a little lamb, when the Prophet (pbuh) said,

> "Do you think the owners of this (Little lamb) contempted it, that they have thrown it like this)?" They said," O Messenger of Allah! They have thrown it because they contempted it. Thereupon the Prophet said, "By Him in whose hand is the soul of Muhammad, the world is more contemptible in the sight of Allah than this (lamb) is in the sightits owners."

At-Tirmidhi said, This is a sound and authenticated *Hadith*. The Prophet (pbuh) did not only give the world the similitude of a dead body of a little lamb, but he also said that it was more contemptible in the sight of Allah than the lamb.

In *Musnad* Ahmad, another narration of this *Hadith* reads,

> "By Him in whose hands is my soul, the World is more contemptible in the sight of Allah

than this little lamb was in the sight of its owners."

He confirmed it with a truthful oath. If this is the case of the world, its Lovers are more contemptible in the sight of Allah than the little lamb. Being a small young lamb makes it even more contemptible than if it was an adult sheep. This is because the owners may have benefited from the wool of the latter or dyed its skin. But a young dead lamb is more contemptible. May Allah help us all!

Example ten: The world is given here the similitude of the sea which everyone must board a ship to cross it safely to the coasts where they live or to their homelands. For this reason, Allah sent His Messengers to command people to make and board the ships of salvation. It represents obedience to His Messengers, worshiping Him alone and working only for His sake, and preparing hard for the Hereafter, making it their goal, and striving for it with the necessary efforts.

Having heard the instructions, the rightly guided people rode the ship and avoided the part of the sea where they knew that it would be impossible to pass safely or swim

through. The foolish however viewed the work needed for motivating the ship along with riding it as a difficult task. They said, "We will dive into the sea, and if we fail, we will cross it swimming." These are the proponents of the world. When they dived into the sea and failed, they started swimming until they drowned. As for the people of the ship, they escaped, as the people of Noah escaped, whereas those who stayed on the land drowned as well.

Now, compare this example with the status quo of the people of the world to see how they are similar. This example is cited for the world, the Hereafter, fate and the means to the Hereafter. The sea represents one's fate and the ship represents the means to the Hereafter. Without this ship, no one can cross safely.

Example eleven: The world this time resembles a container which is full of honey. Flies noticed it and flew towards it. Some of them settled on the edge of the container and started drinking of the honey until they were satisfied, and then they flew away.

Some other flies were pushed by greed to throw themselves in the pool of the container. This led to their

destruction because they submerged themselves in it after they had enjoyed the honey only for a little while.

Example twelve: It is the example of the seeds which were strewn about over a piece of land, Each seed was put in a track, and around them other seeds were scattered without tracks. Birds came. Some of them were content with the seeds on the sides and did not throw themselves in the middle of seeds. They satisfied their needs and then flew away. Some other birds were pushed by greed to break into most of the seeds. As soon they did this the tracks overtook them.

Example thirteen: The status of the world is given the status of a man who kindled a big fire, whose light attracted moths and grasshoppers, and they started crowding up on it. The ones who were aware of this utilized its light and heat from a far distance. The Prophet (pbuh) referred to this same example in the *Hadith* narrated by Malik Ibn Isma`il on the authority of `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (pbuh) said,

> "I am holding you away from the fire, while you are rushing towards it like the moths and

grasshoppers, and I am about to release my hold." In another narration the Prophet said, "My likeness and your likeness is as the likeness of the man who kindled a fire. When it shed its light around him moths and grasshoppers came and started crowding up on it.

(Similarly,) I am holding you away from the fire, while you are resisting me and rushing towards it."[1]

This example is typically applied to the people of the world who are preoccupied with it. Messengers are calling them to the Hereafter while they are rushing towards the worldly life like the moths and grasshoppers.

Example fourteen: It is the example of the people who went out traveling with their people and property. When they passed by a valley full of grass, water and fruit, they stopped at it, pitched their tents, and thereafter built houses

[1] Narrated by Al-Bukhari (6483) and Muslim (2284) on the authority of Abu Hurairah, and Muslim narrated it also on the authority of Jaber (6484).

and palaces. A man known (to them) for his truthfulness, trust and good advice passed by them. He said, "I have seen the army behind this valley with my own eyes coming towards you. Follow me and I will guide you to a way other than that of the enemy, that you may. escape." Few of them obeyed him. Hence, he called out saying, "O people! Escape, escape. They have reached you. They have reached you." Those who listened to him called upon their people, families and sects to encourage them to leave. Nevertheless, they said, "How could we leave this valley where we have our sheep, property and houses, and we have already settled in it. The adviser said, "Let everyone of you escape with his light provision, otherwise he and his property would be invaded. The elites and leaders among them considered it difficult, that they should move into another place leaving their pleasures, luxuries and comfort behind. Every foolish person among them said, "I will follow the example of those who will stay, as they excel me in property and family, so let us face the same destiny. The minority left with the advisor and thus escaped, while the army attacked the people of the valley in the morning killed them, and captured their property.

The Prophet (pbuh) referred to this same example as reported in the *Hadith* on the authority of Abu Musa, who said the Prophet (pbuh) said,

> "Verily, my likeness and the likeness of what Allah has sent me with is as the likeness of the man who came to his people and said, "O people! I have assuredly seen the army and I am an-Nadhirul-`Uryan (the eloquent warne[1] so you have to escape." Some others, however, denied it. The morning came while they were still in their town. The army came in the morning, invaded the city and killed them. This is the example of the one who obeys me and follows what I have come with, and of the one who disobeys me and denies the truth that I have come with.[2]

Example fifteen: It is the example of the man who built a house, decorated it and brought for it every kind of

---

(1) This is according to some interpretation, but there are more noteworthy details in Fat-hul-bari. (Translator).

(2) Bukhari (6482), and Muslim (2283).

luxurious furniture. He used to invite people to it. Every time a guest came, he seated him in a comfortable chair, presented him a golden dish of meat, placed before him fancy utensils containing everything he may have needed, and put his servants and slaves at his disposal. Every reasonable guest realized that all of that belonged to the head of the house, so he enjoyed the luxuries and the hospitality as long as he stayed in the house. He never inclined his heart to them, nor did he think of taking them. Rather, he only acted as a guest; he sat where his host seated him, and ate what was presented to him. He never asked for anything more, as he enjoyed the man's hospitality to him, as well as with the other guests. Thus, he entered the house, enjoyed its pleasure and then left it all honorably. Moreover, the head of the house liked his visit. As for the foolish guest, he thought of dwelling in the house, possessing the luxuries and using them according to his own will and desires. Hence, he chose for himself the place in which he sat, and stanted transferring the stuff into a particular place in the house where he hid them. Whenever his host presented something to him, he thought of possessing it. Meanwhile, the host was witnessing

everything that the foolish guest was doing, but his generosity and nobleness prevented him from pushing him out. He definitely observed the man supervising the luxuries and acting as if he possessed the house, and that he settled in it, as if it was his own house. He sent him his slaves, and they pushed him out violently, and restored the things he had stolen. He had nothing but animosity and despise of the head of the house and the scandal that surmounted him among the slaves and servants. Now, let every man of intelligence contemplate this example, for it exemplifies the status quo of people.

`Abdullah Ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "Every human being in this world is a guest and his property a trust: the guest is going to leave and the trust will be restored" (i.e. by Allah). Anas Ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) reported "When a son of Abu Talhah's died, the boy's mother, Umm Salim, said to her people, "Do not tell Abu Talhah, and let me tell him myself." Therefore, when he came she served him his supper. He ate and drank, then she prepared herself for him with full adornment in a way she had never done before, that he slept with her. When she observed he was gratified

she said, "O Abu Talhah! If some people left a trust with some household, and then asked to take it back, could the household prevent it? He said, "No." Thereupon she said, "Thus your son has gone." Ibn Malik said, "So he fell in rage and said, "Did you leave me until I polluted myself and then you told me about my son's death? Abu Talhah went straight to the Prophet (pbuh) and told him about everything she did. The Prophet (pbuh) said,

"May Allah bless your night for you."[1]

Example sixteen: It is an example of a group of people, who traveled through a desert. Suddenly, they became so thirsty, that they drank from the sea, whose water was very bitter and salty, but their thirst did not make them feel it. They kept drinking, but the more they drank, the more their thirst increased, until the water exploded their intestines and caused them to die. The smart ones from among them realized that the water was bitter and salty, and that the more those people drank from it, the more their thirst increased. Being aware of this, they left it and traveled until they found a good land, in which they

---

(1) Bukhari (1301), and Muslim (2144).

dug a well, which produced sweet water. They drank, kneaded and cooked, and called out for their companions at the sea to come and drink too. Some of them mocked at the callers and some rejected the invitation and were satisfied with the sea water. Ironically enough, the ones who answered the call came one after the other. This example was referred to in the words of the Prophet (pbuh) that reads, "The likeness of those who pursue the worldly life is as the likeness of those who drink from the sea water. The more they drink, the more their thirst grows until it kills them."

Example seventeen: The likeness of man with his property, deeds and people is as the likeness of the man who had three brothers. When he had to travel on a long and far journey, he called his brothers and said to them, "As you see, I have to task this long journey, and I need your help badly." One of them said, "I was your brother, but now I am no longer that brother or companion, and I have nothing else to do or say. The man said, "This is of no use to me." Then he said to the other one, "How will you help me?" The brother said, "I was and still am your brother, and I will be with you until you have become

ready to start traveling, but after that I will not accompany you." The man said, "But I need your company on my journey." His brother said, "I can never go with you." The man said, "This is of no use to me either." Then he said to the third brother, "And you, what do you have?" He said, "I accompanied you whether you were sound or sick and I am your companion right now; I will accompany you when you ride your travel-mount, and I will be your travel companion, who walks where you walk and stops when you do. Furthermore, when you reach your destination, I will accompany you in every step." Thereupon the man said, "Actually, you were the feeblest companion in my sight, and I used to prefer both of them to you. The first is his property and the second his relatives, sect and fellows and the third his deeds. This example was referred to in a *Hadith* traced up to the Prophet, but it is not authenticated. However, it was reported by Abu Ja`far al-`Ugayli in the book of "AdDu`afa`, the weak", on the authority of `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) All the same, it is such a sound example in its own right and typical to the status quo of people.

Example eighteen: This is one of the best examples. It

is of the king who built a house that was most beautiful and spacious. It contained all forms of pleasure and prosperity. He made a path to it, and then sent a man to invite people to visit it. On the path, he seated a beautiful woman with full adornment and precious jewelry. All the visitors had to pass by her before reaching the house. He also set helpers and servants with her, and provided them with supplies to give to the people as they passed. The king said to her (and the helpers), "Whoever lowers his gaze before you and is not distracted by you from me, and asks only for supplies to help him on his way to me, serve him and provide him with the necessary supplies. Do not put stumbling blocks in his way, but rather give him everything that may help him. And whoever glances at you, prefers you to me, and asks to establish relations with you, then treat him mercilessly, humiliate his honor, and make him run after you like wild beasts. Whoever takes anything from you, use it to deceive him with for some time. Then, take it all back and overpower him by your servants and slaves. The more he exaggerates in showing his love, glorification, and esteem towards you, the more you should humiliate, insult and desert him, until his soul gets distressed because of his

fruitless efforts."

Try to contemplate this example comparing it with the status of those who pursue the worldly life and these who seek the Hereafter.

Example nineteen: This example is about the king who designed a city in the best place that contained fresh air and abundant water. He dug rivers in it and grew trees, and said to his subjects, "Compete with one another in getting the best places in the city, and whoever reaches a place before the other will own it. But, whoever fails to go, people will precede him, possess the empty places and settle in them. He will have only regrets." However, the king prepared the location of the competition and grew there a great tree which provided wide shade and had running water under it. The tree had all kinds of fruit, and wondrous birds lived amongst its branches. The king said to them, "Do not let this shadowy tree deceive you, since it will be uprooted soon from upon the earth, its shade will fade away, its fruit will cease to bare, and its birds will perish. But the king's city provides permanent fruit and shade, its pleasure will last for ever, and contains what no

one has ever seen, heard or even imagined." People heard of the city and went out steadily to get in. They passed by the great tree at a time when they were most exhausted and thirsty after a long journey in the heat of the sun. The whole group rested under the tree, enjoyed its shade, the sweetness of its fruit, and the melodies of its birds. They were told that they were allowed to rest there only to get prepared for the competition. Then, they received the order that they should be ready to mount when they hear the alarm. Most of them said, "How could we leave this abundant shade, sweet water, ripened fruit, rest and comfort, and break through the ring of the competition and face heat, dust, exhaustion, hardship, long travel and deserts, which cause people to die from thirst? How could we leave this present pleasure to face some other place that we have never known or seen? How could we leave what is a known reality for something which may be a mere probability? We will stay right here to enjoy our present life, and will not leave in searching for that place. We do not even know when we will get there. However, one out of a thousand people got up and said, "By Allah, it is certainly important to stay here under a temporary shade of

a tree which will soon perish with its fruit and birds, and leave the competition thinking of the plenteous, permanent, shade and good living. Is it reasonable that the traveler, who is resting under some shade, should raise a house in it and takes it as his country only to protect himself against heat and cold? This is mere foolishness. So let us go to the competition and the sooner the better."

Then they broke through the ring of the competition, paying no attention to the smallness of their number. They went on with determination, fearing no blame of any blamer among those who stayed sleeping under the shade of the tree. The tree soon dropped its leaves and stopped producing any fruit, its branches hardened and the water stopped flowing underneath. Then Allah uprooted it totally, and the people were left under the live heat surmounted by bitter regrets. Allah burned the tree with a great fire, to the extent that hell surrounded them and none of them could escape. During this time, they enquired about the ones who left them, and it was said to them, "Raise you eyes up and you will see where they are." When they did, they saw them in the distance in the palaces of the king's city enjoying different sorts of pleasures. Having

seen them in that pleasure, they fell deeper and deeper into the abyss of regret, especially, they were prevented from joining them. Rather, they were told that this was a fair punishment for staying back.

> ﴾ We did them no wrong, but they were used to doing wrong to themselves. ﴿
>
> (An-Nahl: 118)

Example twenty: This example was cited by the Prophet (pbuh) and it showed the world as a garment which has been torn up and only one thread at its end keeps it suspended. It is really a thread of no use! Ibn Abud Dunya reported that Anas Ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) said, The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said,

> "The likeness of this world is as the likeness of a garment which has been torn thoroughly, but it is still kept suspended by a thread at the end of it; yet this thread is about to separate."[1]

---

[1] Transmitted by Abu Na'eem in Hiliyataul-awliya' (8/131) and said, it is a strange Hadith.

To explain this in a more detailed manner, let us read the *Hadith* reported by Abu Sa`id in which he narrated, "The Prophet (pbuh) led us in the After-noon Prayer (Al-`Asr), and then delivered a speech in which he told us everything that will have happened by the Day of Resurrection. Some people memorized it and some others forgot it. People looked up to the sun to see how long it would last before the setting. Thereupon the Prophet said,

> "Verily, the time remaining in (the lifetime of) this world (when compared) with the time passed from it is as what still remains in (the time of) this day (as compared) with the time passed from it."[1]

Hafs Ibn Ghaiyyath reported that Ibn `Umar said, "The Prophet (pbuh) came out towards us when the sun was about to set and said,

> "The time remaining in (the lifetime of) the world (as compared) with the time passed from it is as the time remaining in this day (as

[1] i.e. from the beginning of the day up till the time of the Hadith (translator). 3. Musnad Ahmad (3161).

compared) with the time passed from it."[1]

So the whole worldly life seems as if it is a day and the Prophet (pbuh) was sent a little bit before its sunset.

Jabir and Abu Huraiah (may Allah be pleased with both of them) reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said,

> "The time between my Message and the Hour[2] is as (the distance) between these two." and connected his index finger to his middle one."[3]

One of the Early Muslims said, "Persevere patiently, for there are only few days remaining. You are not but a traveling caravan standing by. Any one of you may be called at any time, and he will not be able to do anything but answer the call. Here I am pronouncing your coming death, which is an inevitable confinement. Remember Allah is ever watchful and the souls leave the bodies to one of

---

(1) At-Tabarani narrated it in his three Mu`janis, glossaries, and also AL-Haythami in Majma` Az-Zawa`id (10/311).

(2) i.e. the Day of Resurrection.

(3) Bukhari.

the destinies mentioned in *Surat* al Waqi`ah.[1]

Example twenty-one: The likeness of the world here is as the likeness of a big basin full of water. This basin had been made to supply water for both people and animals. The water started to decrease as the demand grew, until there was only a small quantity at the bottom. It was ruined by the urine of animals and the feet of people. Muslim reported that `Utbah Ibn Ghazawan delivered a speech and said, "The world has passed so quickly, that it is about to reach its end; what remains from is as the small quantity of water left at the bottom of a utensil. No doubt, you are leaving it for an immortal Abode, so be ready with the best of your present life."[2] Moreover, Abdullah Ibn Mas`ud said, "Allah the Almighty has made the whole world to be

---

(1) The verses 88-94 in surat- al-Waqi'ah. Allah the Almighty says, "Thus, then, if he be of those Nearest to Allah, (there is for him) Rest and Satisfaction, and a Garden of Delight. And if he be of the Companions of the Right Hand, (for him is the salutation), "peace be unto thee," from the Companions of the Right Hand. And if he be of those who deny (the truth) who go wrong, for him is Entertainment with Boiling Water, and burning in Hell-Fire.

(2) Muslim 2967.

of a short time; what remains from it is growing shorter and shorter. The likeness of the time remaining is as the pool whose pure water has been drunk, and what remains there is only a roily quantity."

Example twenty-two: It is an example about a group of people who resided in a city for sometime, until calamities and epidemics struck it, and wicked soldiers invaded it and caused destruction and corruption everywhere. Because of this, the king of those people built another city in a zone that contained no epidemics or plague. He was determined to corrupt the first city, so he sent for its residents to evacuate within three days. He ordered them to transfer to the new city everything valuable and precious, such as jewels, pearls, gold, silver and whatever thing that may be tantamount to the king's class. The king provided the people of the city with guides and transferring mechanisms, showed them the road, installed guiding flags for them, and kept sending messengers, successively to urge them along the way. But they were divided into different sects. The minority among them realized that the time that they were going to spend in the city was quite short, and were sure that if they had not

been so steady in bearing the precious things to the king, they would have failed. Therefore, they decided not to bother collecting things of little value, and instead asked about what the king loved most, and what would be more beneficial in his city. When they knew such things, they paid no attention to the things of lesser value. They learned that a great precious jewel would be more beloved to the king than many loads of money, iron and the like. Thus, they spent time and effort in collecting things of this nature, even if others devalued them.

Mobilization of the loads distracted another group, and they competed with one another in how many loads they could carry. Their degrees varied and everyone showed his own capacity. Anyhow, they were only interested in mobilizing the loads for transferring them to the king's city. Another group eagerly started to construct palaces in the first city, and were entirely overcome by its pleasures. This group fought with those who were preparing to leave the city and said to them they would never let them go out with any of their property, and that they could only participate with them in constructing the city and settling in it.

The debate led to an unfair war. They attacked those who were on the way to the king, although they had nothing against them except that they left to go to the king and refused to stay in the city. Another group chose unemployment, rest and comfort. They said they would not ask hard work in constructing or transferring, nor would they oppose or cooperate with those who want to transfer. In the first city, the king had a palace in which female members of his family dwelt. An enclosure and guards surrounded the palace, and nobody was allowed to approach it. Those who chose rest and comfort wandered around the palace but did not find a gate through which they could get in. Consequently, they collapsed the walls of the palace, got in and assaulted the women. They not only committed that horrible crime, which enraged the king, but they also invited others to do the same.

Each group were busy complementing their work, there came an ever-whelming alarm that let none of them stay back. Then the soldiers brought them to the king. He interviewed them one after the other. Their goods and everything they came with from the city were displayed. The king took what he thought of to be his equivalent, and

gave those who brought them folds of their value, and let them dwell near to him. He also gave the rest of the provision to the elites among his companions.

As for those who violated his honor and assaulted his women, the king dealt with them as he used to treat the corrupters. They tried to beg him to let them go back to the city to serve in his palace and maintain his women, and bring him goods as the traders had done, but he said, "Begone! The city has been corrupted in a way that never allows any new construction. The city that nothing can ever corrupt still exists.

Remember well

The world was said to resemble sleeping, living in it to resemble dreaming. and death to resemble waking up. It also was given the similitude of a plantation while working in it is like seeds, and harvesting is like the Day of Judgment. Moreover, some others said, its likeness is like a house with two doors, one to enter and the other to exit. Others said it resembles a good colored snake whose touch is soft, but it brings death with its sting. Similarly, it was counted as resembling poisonous food that has delicious

taste and good smell. Whoever takes from it only what he needs gets remedy, but whoever overtakes from it meets his end. Furthermore, this world was said to resemble food in the stomach. When the organs absorb their need out of it, there is still something that kills or at least harms. The only way to obtain peace in the body is to release this thing, just as the Prophet (pbuh) referred to in the *Hadith* of the sheep, which we have already cited. Some people said that the world is like one of the ugliest women, who veils her face except her eyes, with which she seduces people while inviting them to her house. If they accept the invitation, she uncovers her face before them and then slays them and throw them in her holes. By the same manner, the world has been made to overpower its lovers and deal with them in the same way. Ironically, its lovers may see their brothers slain, but they compete with one another for the thing for which the others have been slain. How truthful are the Divine Words reading,

> ﴾ And ye dwelt in the dwellings of men who wronged themselves and ye were clearly shown how we dealt with them; and We put forth (many) parables in your behoof! ﴿ (Ibrahim: 45)

How sufficient and applicable is the Qur`anic similitude of the world.

In the following lines, we may see what the world is from the perspective of the people of knowledge in general.

They said if the case with the world is that bad, asceticism is more recommendable than inclination to it.

It is well known that wishing for the worldly life can never exist along with wishing for the satisfaction of Allah and the Hereafter. This is because once one of the two wishes exists in a place, they start fighting until one of them pushes the other out, just as the daughter of the Prophet (pbuh) could never be with the daughter of an enemy of Allah's under the marriage lock of one man.[1]

It should be enough to convince you if you remember

---

(1) This is a reference to the Hadith narrated by Abu Dawood (2068) and Ahmad in his Musnad (4/326) that when `Ali Ibn Abi Talib wanted to propose Abu Jal`s daughter for marriage, the Prophet (phub) knew it and said, "By Allah, the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) never be combined with the daughter of the enemy of Allah under (the marriage lock of one man."

that the keys and treasures of the world were presented to the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). If he had taken them,, he would have been the most grateful of people, and it would have never reduced what Allah kept for him, but he chose to be hungry on some days and satisfied on others, and he died and his coat of mail had to be mortgaged to secure food for his family.

After the death of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), people were divided into four sections, the first one did not want the worldly life, nor did it want them, such as Abu Bakr and those who followed his steps. The second section were wanted by the world but they did not want it, such as `Umar Ibnul-Khattab and those who followed his steps. The third section wanted the world and it also wanted them, such as the Caliphs of Banu Umaiyyah and those who followed their steps save `Umar Ibn `Abdul-`Aziz, since he did not want the world, though it wanted him. The fourth section wanted the world but it did not want them, and those were whom Allah deprived of its pleasure but inculcated it in their hearts to test them. It is surely clear that the best section is the first one; the second section is connected with the first because its

people did not want the world either.[1]

Someone asked the Prophet (pbuh) to guide him to the deed, which, if he did Allah would love him and so would people. The Prophet said to him,

> "Renounce the world and Allah will love you, and renounce what people possess and they will love you."[2]

Thus, if richness were to be better, he would have guided him to it indeed.

Allah has made it lawful to fight against disbelievers, but He legislated that Muslims must not hurt monks because of their abandoning of the world and their asceticism in it. So it is part of the *Sunnah* that they should not be fought or asked to pay *Jiziah*[3] though they are enemies to Allah, His religion and Messengers. Therefore,

---

(1) Transmitted by Ibn Majah (4 1-2) on the authority of Sahih Ibn Sa`ad, and An-Nawawi said it is a sound Hadith in Riyadus-saliheen (475).

(2) Poll tax prescribed by the state on the People of the Book. (Translator)

(3) Transmitted by Muslim (2956) on the authority of Abu Hurairah.

it is quite clear that Allah appreciates handling asceticism in the world.

Similarly, out of His wisdom in legislation, Allah has made the punishment for the adulterer to be more sever than that for the fornicator, as the punishment for the former is stoning to death but that for the latter is lashing and exile. This is because the adulterer has a wife, but this is not the case with the fornicator.

How could the humility, submission, bitterness, hardship and struggle caused by poverty be equal in the sight of Allah to the dignity, pleasure, power, and sweetness obtained by richness? It is with the help of Allah, that the poor can stand the bitterness of poverty, that they be satisfied with Allah, their Lord (Exalted be He). And how could the hardship faced by those who struggle for the sake of Allah be compared with the worship of those who are surmounted by security, rest and comfort?

How could poverty, which brings hardship but may lead to Paradise be equal to property, which is the origin of lusts and may lead to the Fire?

The poor man always suffers from hardships, hunger,

lack of clothes, and pains caused by poverty. But every form of these sufferings expatiates some of his sins, in addition to the reward he receives for his good works. Thus, he participates, with the rich in handling good works, but exceeds them with the merit of expatiating his sins. Suffice it to say that he could stand with them on the same footing, which they obtained as a result of their beneficence and get rewards.equal to theirs on condition that he intends that if he had had means like theirs he would have done their deeds. He may say, "If I had had money I would have done as they do." Therefore, his intention puts him beside them in reward, as the truthful Prophet (pbuh) told in .the authenticated *Hadith* narrated by Imam Ahmad and At-Tirmidhi on the authority of Abu Kabshah al-Anmari.

In this world, the position of the poor man resembles that of the prisoner, as he is not allowed to gratify his lusts and desires, but the rich man is in no way captured by such a prison. The Prophet (pbuh) said,

> "The world is the prison of the believer and the paradise of the disbeliever."[1]

---

[1] Transmitted by Muslim (2956) on the authority of Abu Hurairah.

If the rich man does not imprison himself away from the causes of transgression by his riches, and releases it in the field of lusts, the world becomes his paradise. But if he does the opposite he gets the virtue of this imprisonment only because he imitates what the poor naturally do in the prison of poverty.

Allah and His Messenger dispraise whoever gets every part in his share of good life in this world. What a poor compensation for the good of the Hereafter! Such a person is not to be equalized with the one who complements his good life in the Hereafter as a compensation for depriving him of it in the world.

Al-Hasan Al-Basri was asked, "Which of these two men you prefer: the one who abandons the worldly pleasure or the one who gains it and then gives from it in charity?" He said, "I prefer the one who abandons it."

Christ (pbuh) was asked about his opinion concerning two men: one of them passed by a golden brick but left it and went on, and when the other one passed by it, picked it up and gave it in charity. Christ (pbuh) said, "The one who did not pay attention to the brick is better." The Prophet

(pbuh) also passed by a similar brick but paid no attention to it. If however he had taken it, he would have certainly spent it.

The poor man who is intelligent in dealing with his poverty may achieve all what the rich man achieves by the means his riches secures. He could get the same reward, in addition to escaping from accounting for the property, for he does not have any. He is not only distinguished by this merit, but he also precedes the rich man in entering Paradise for five hundred years, and gets more rewards for his holding of patience in facing poverty.

Abu Kabshah reported the Prophet (pbuh) to have said,

> "There are three things which I swear (that they are right) and I will deliver a speech, which you have to keep. The three things which I swear (that they are right) are: Giving in charity never decreases property, and whenever a man is wronged in something and he holds patience, Allah (Glorified and Exalted by He) certainly upgrades his dignity. And, whenever a man opens, a gate to beg-

gary, Allah certainly opens for him a gate to poverty. As for the speech which you have to keep (in mind, learn that) the world has four (types of) people (The first type is) a man whom Allah provides with property and knowledge that he keeps his duty to his Lord concerning it",[1] uses it to link with his relatives, and knows the right of Allah in it; this is one of the best degrees in the sight of Allah. (The second type is) a man whom Allah provides with knowledge, but He does not provide him with property, that he says, "If I had had property I would have used it as so and so do." The Prophet said, "Both of them receive equal rewards. (The third type is) a man whom Allah provides with property, but He does not provide him with knowledge, that he is prostrated by ignorance in (using) his property; he does not keep his duty to his Lord concerning it, nor does he use it to link with his relatives, nor does he know the right

[1] i.e.the property.

of Allah in it. This is one of the worst degrees in the sight of Allah. (Lastly, the fourth type is) the man whom Allah provides neither with property nor with knowledge, that he says, "If I had had property I would have used it as so-and-so do." The Prophet said, "Both of them bear equal burdens because of his intention.[1]

Thus, the truthful, poor man's intention makes him stand by the rich man in the reward for his action. The other rich man loses because he does not work, but the other poor man loses because of his bad intention. So property with ignorance issues no good fruit, yet poverty does not harm the poor man because he has a good.

---

[1] Musnad Ahmad (4/231)

CHAPTER TWENTY FOUR

Textual Proofs of the Rich

The rich said: 'O Poor people! You have brought many proofs of your poverty, and we know that you still have more, but you have chosen the position between expansion and brevity, thinking that you have been judged as better than the well to do. Now, we are suing you before the same court. Using the *Shari'ah* and reason, we will provide evidence of the reality between us. Our aim is to reveal to whom the priority is. But first of all, we must cast off all who pretend and try the role of the patient and truthful poor man; who is really miserly committed to the world and so far from poverty and patience.

We must purify our court from those who are distracted from their Lord and the Hereafter through gratifying their own lusts; such are professionals in impersonating the poor, yet have none of their characteristics. We also must throw off every man who has become poor as a result of lack and necessity. This is because his asceticism is mere bankruptcy, not for the sake of Allah and the Hereafter. We do not want the poor man

who complains his Lord through showing his dissatisfaction; he is always in a state of discontent unless he is provided with bounties; and he is very anxious, seeking the world and what it offers. This makes him the poorest of people because of his intense love of the world, while it deludes him. Let him, who possesses huge riches but never gives anything out of it be far from us. He is delighted when his wealth increases and falls into despair when it decreases, while he is very cautious to collect it from any place. Whenever he is asked to give from his wealth, he gives a little and even then, gives grudgingly. No altruism is found in him.

Let us be united with our brothers who are racing towards Allah and the Hereafter with their belief, while aiming to get close to Him with their deeds and property. Their hearts are intent on His obedience, and they are highly motivated to obtain His satisfaction. When the rich man among them observes that his poor brother has excelled him in some good work, he does his best to follow his example. And when the poor among them observe that the rich have excelled them in obedience to Allah by virtue of beneficence and alms-giving, they tend to be beneficent

like them through good works and words, patience and asceticism as much as or more than the rich have done. Such people are our brothers, those who are better and higher in degree than the other. But the other type of people are only to be considered concerning the question of who among them is lower than the others in the Fire.

Having provided this background, we may say that Allah (Glory be to Him) praises, in the Qur`an, certain works, which cannot be performed without having wealth, such as paying *Zakat* and spending in the fields of charity, Jihad in the cause of Allah, helping the needy, setting slaves free, and feeding, especially at the time of famine.

What is the position of the patience of the poor in comparison with the delight of the oppressed man near to destruction, when a rich man supports him in his time of need? And where would he stand when compared with the rich man who spends his money in the cause of Allah against His enemies?

What is the position of the patience of Abu Dhar in the face of poverty, in companson to the gratitude shown by Abu Bakr, as he spent his money in freeing the slaves, who

were under the heat of torment for the sake of Allah. Abu Bakr also spent his money to uphold the Word of Allah. The Prophet (pbuh) said:

> "There was no more beneficial property for me than the property of Abu Bakr."[1]

And what is the position of the beneficence of the *Sufis* (mystics) when compared with `Uthman Ibn `Affan's beneficence, which the Prophet highly praised?[2]

In contemplating the Qur`an, we find that there are more thanks for those who give in charity than for the patient poor people. The Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), in addition, witnessed that the high hand is better than the low one, explaining that the high hand is the one that gives in charity and the low hand is the one that asks for charity.[3] Interestingly enough, Allah (Glory be to Him) reminded His Prophet that He enriched

---

(1) Transmitted by At-Tirmidhi (3661) who said it is a Hasan Gharib Hadith, and transmitted also by others.

(2) Referred to in the Hadith no. 3701, At-Tirmidhi.

(3) Muslim (1033) and Al-Bukhari (1427), but Al-Bukhari's narration does not contain the explanation referred to above.

him after he had been destitute. So poverty was the first condition, which Allah changed to a better one, represented in enrichment. Allah used to transfer His Prophet from one condition to another one, which was always better.

It is a sign of bounty and mercy that one is rich and grateful. Allah says:.

> ﴾ But Allah will choose for His special Mercy whom He will for Allah is Lord of grace abounding. ﴿ (Al-Baqarah: 105)

The grateful rich people participate in helping the patient poor people to obey Allah, since they give them alms and other incentives that motivate them to be more obedient. Thus they receive rewards equal to those of the poor, in addition to their rewards for being kind and obedient.

Salman Al-Farisi (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (pbuh) mentioned the month of Ramadan and said:

"Whoever provides (food) during it[1] for a person to break his fast his sins will be forgiven and his neck set free from the Fire, and he will receive a reward equal to his[2] reward, and nothing of his reward will decrease.[3]

Thus, the grateful rich man receives the reward for his own observance of fasting along with another reward equal to that of the poor man whom he enables to have breakfast.

It is enough for the grateful rich man to have the virtue of giving in charity, which is said to be the best of good works. Sa`id Ibnul-Musaiyyab reported that `Umar Ibnul-Khattab said: "It is said that good works pride one another upon their virtues, and alms-giving says: "I am the best among you.

Giving in charity, moreover, protects the servant

---

(1) i.e. during the month of Ramadan.

(2) i.e. the fasting person who is being fed.

(3) Transmitted Ibn Khuzaymah in his Sahih (1887) but he added the clause "If the report is authenticated" which indicates that the transmission is weak.

against the Fire. And whoever gives alms faithfully and secretly will enjoy the merit of being under the shade of the Throne on the Day of Resurrection. `Uqbah Ibn `Amir (May Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said:

> "Verily, alms put out the heat of the graves of those who gave them. Indeed, the believer will be shaded on the Day of Resurrection in the shade of his own alms."[1]

In another narration `Uqbah reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said:

> "Every one will be (shaded) in the shade of his alms until Allah judges between people."[2]

Also Mu`adh reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said,

> "Alms put the sin Out, as water puts out fire."[3]

---

(1) Transmitted by At-Tabarani in al-Kabeer (17/286). Al-Haythamti said in majmauz-zawa`id (3/100): Ibn Luhay`ah is one of its transmitters, and he is not absolutely authenticated.

(2) Musnad Ahmad (4/147, 148) and others.

(3) At-Termidhi (2616), and Ibn Majah (3972).

Abu Hurairah reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said,

> "When the servant gives alms out of good earnings and Allah accepts only what is good Allah takes them with His right hand and grows them up for him as someone grows up his colt or young (weaned) camel, until they become as a big mountain"[1]

And in Al-Bayhaqi's narration of the same *Hadith:*

> "(to the extent) that the date or the mouthful becomes bigger than Uhud"[2]

As Allah (Glory be to Him) forgave the man who provided a thirsty dog with wate,[3] He also forgives those who provide the thirsty with watrer, feed the hungry and clothe those who have no clothes from amongst Muslims. The Prophet (pbuh) said:

> "Ward off the Fire even with the half of a date, and (even) if you do not find it, let it be with

(1) Bukhari and Muslim (1014).
(2) A large well-known mountain near Al-Madinah.
(3) Bukhari (6009) and Muslim (2244) on the authority of Abu Hurayrah.

a good word."[1]

Look at the pleasure and joy obtained as a result of beneficence and alms-giving, in addition to the love and glorification which Allah puts in the hearts of His servants when you help them; they invoke Allah for you and praise your deed because you contribute to their delight. Indeed, it is the kind of work that deserves great rewards. However, rewarding differs in the sight of Allah.

Beneficence and generosity are derived from the attributes of Allah (Glory be to Him) as He is the Most Beneficent, the Most Generous. He likes most all Muslims having such attributes.

In the Qur`an, Allah cites the types of the happy people, starting with those who give in charity. The Divine Words read:

> ﴾For those who give in charity, men and women, and loan to Allah a Beautiful Loan, it shall be increased manifold (to their credit), and they shall have (besides) a generous

[1] Bukhari (6022), and Muslim (1016).

reward. And those who believe in Allah and His messengers they are the Truthful and the martyrs, in the eye of their Lord: they shall have their Reward and their Light. ﴾

(Al-Hadid: 18-19)

Giving alms secures benefits and interests of great multitude, such as protection against evil and tribulation; it wards away evil even from oppressors.

Ibrahim An-Nakh'i said: "The people of knowledge held that alms-giving wards away evil even from the oppressor, puts out sins, maintains property, issues more provision, delights the heart, and inculcates trust in Allah. It helps the Muslim have a good intention concerning his affairs with Allah, but miserliness formulates a bad intention. Alms-giving moreover defeats the Devil, purifies the soul, makes the servant beloved by Allah and His creatures, and covers all his vices and defects; yet miserliness repeals the blessing of all good works. Alms-giving also increases one's lifetime, procures people's invocations and love, wards off the torment of the grave, and shades its people on the Day of Resurrection,

intercedes for them before Allah, alleviates their sufferings in the world and in the Hereafter, and facilitates good words for them. However, these are just a few examples of the benefits of alms-giving."

If the only benefit one can gain from beneficence were that it is derived from the attribute, "the Most Beneficent", of Allah, it would be sufficient indeed. Allah (Glory be to Him) likes those who try to inculcate His attributes in their own works. Thus Allah likes the people who are knowing, beneficent, and mighty. He likes the strong believer more than the weak one. He also likes those who are just, forgiving, merciful, grateful, righteous and generous. Besides, as He is the Most Beneficent, Who is in no need of His creatures, He likes those who are beneficent and ask only Him.

How sufficient it is, that the reward here is always of the same nature as the work done! Thus whoever clothes a believer, Allah clothes him with a garment from Paradise; whoever feeds a hungry person, Allah feeds him from the fruits of Paradise; whoever provides a thirsty person with water, Allah lets him drink from the water of Paradise;

whoever sets a slave free, Allah sets free with each organ of the slave's, one of his own organs from the Fire; whoever makes easy the hardship of an impoverished person, Allah makes his hardship easy in the world and in the Hereafter; and whoever relieves a believer of some trouble in the world, Allah relieves him of some trouble of the Day of Resurrection. Moreover, Allah helps the servant as long as he helps his brother.

The people of knowledge said they did not deny the virtue of holding patience in the face of poverty, but they asked: "What is its position among these virtues, especially as Allah has set a measure for all things?"

They added that the Prophet (pbuh) said that the grateful eater stands on the same footing with the patient faster.[1] Surely, it is known that when the gratitude of this eater pushes him to be beneficent with others, his degrees increase, since gratitude is upgraded without measure, but patience is limited in this regard and it cannot go beyond the ordained limits. This is an independent proof of the question. It may be clarified by the fact that he who is

[1] Al-Bukhari (9/582), and At-Tirmidhi (2486).

grateful is better than the one who is satisfied with what Allah has given him; and as this satisfied person is better than the patient, then the grateful one has priority over the patient by two degrees.

Salim reported that his father said that the Prophet (pbuh) said:

> "There is no (place for) envy but in two cases: (the first one is of) the man whom Allah has given the Qur`an, and he stands (in Prayer) with it[1] during the night and the day, and (the second case is of) the man whom Allah has given property, and he gives out of it in charity during the night and the day."[2]

Thus the Prophet (pbuh) made wealth with beneficence, equal to the memorization of the Qur`an along with constant recitation of it in Prayers.

The Prophet (pbuh) also stated in the *Hadith* narrated on the authority of Abu Kabshah Al-Ansari that, when the man who has knowledge uses his property in accordance

---

(1) I.e.,with the recitation of the Qur`an.
(2) Bukhari (7529), and Muslim (815).

with that good knowledge, (to the extent) that he is conscious of Allah, utilizes it to link with his relatives, and spends out of it in charity, then such a man is highly rewarded and upgraded by Allah. This is an explicit statement indicating his priority. The Prophet (pbuh) also stated in the same *Hadith* that, when the truthful poor man says that if he had had money like the rich man, he would have done as he did, his intention makes him receive a reward equal to that of the rich man. This is because each one of them has a good intention and works according to his own capacity; the rich man intends and carries out with his property, and the poor man, who has knowledge intends but carries out with his tongue, yet they receive the same reward. However, the equality in their reward does not necessarily mean that it should be equal in quantity, quality and details, since the reward received for intending the work along with carrying it out, excels the reward received only for the intention expressed by the tongue. To illustrate, the person who intends to perform Pilgrimage but does not have money to help him do so is rewarded, but his reward is not equal with that of the person who actually performs the rituals of Pilgrimage with the same

intention.

To understand it more clearly, you may contemplate the *Hadith* in which the Prophet (pbuh) said,

> "Whoever asks Allah for martyrdom faithfully from his heart, Allah gives him the rank of a martyr even if he should die in his bed."[1]

No doubt, the reward received by the person who is killed in the cause of Allah excels in quantity and quality the reward received by the person who only faithfully wishes martyrdom and dies in his bed, even if he is given the rank of a martyr. Thus, there are two forms of reward here: the reward deserved and nearness. If they receive the same reward, the physical treatment of the worker requires more appreciation and a special kind of nearness, which is mainly attributed to Allah who bestows His bounty on whom He wills. By the same token, the Prophet (pbuh) said:

> "Whenever two Muslims face each other with their swords, then both the killer and the one

[1] Muslim (1909) on the authority of Sahl Ibn Hunayf.

killed are in the Fire." They said: this is (the fair punishment of) the killer, but what about the one killed? The Prophet said: "He wanted to kill his rival."[1]

Thus, they receive the same punishment, but it does not necessarily mean that it should be to the same degree of torment. So, if you want to know the real meaning of the Prophet's words then treat them in the way they deserve"[2]

The poor people among the Emigrants[3] complained to the Prophet (pbuh) and said:

"O Messenger of Allah! The well to do receive (all) the rewards; they perform Prayers as we do and observe Fasting as we do, but they have surplus money with which they perform Pilgrimage and. *Umrah,* strive (in the cause of Allah) and give in charity. The Prophet

(1) AL-Bukhari (7083), and Muslim (2888) on the authority of Abu Bakrah.

(2) i.e. in analysis, understanding, application, and the like.(Translator)

(3) Those who emigrated with the Prophet from Makkah to Al-Madinah.

(pbuh) said: "Shall I not then teach you something with which you reach those who went before you and precede those who will come after you, and none will be better than you but the one who does as you do? They said, yes, O Messenger of Allah!" The Prophet said: "Say *Subhanal-lah*[1] *Alhamdu lil-lah*[2], and *Allahu akbar*[3] thirty three times (each) after the end of every Prayer.' Later, they came back to the Messenger of Allah and said: "Our well to do brothers heard of what we did and did the same. The

---

(1) It means, "Glory be to Allah." (Translator).

(2) It means, "Praise be to Allah." (Translator)

(3) It means, "Allah is greater." I preferred using 'the Greater' to 'the Greatest', as it is commonly used. Allahu akbar literally means, " Allah is greater" with the comparative mode. Yet, this does not mean that He (Glory be to Him) is not the Greatest, nor does it mean that there is anything that is put in comparison with Him. This is because when the Muslim says it he means He is "greater" than anything else, which, consequently, means He is the Greatest. This use gives more influence. This may be why it is used in Arabic in this way, otherwise it should have been used as Allahu al-akbar, in the superlative mode. Surely, Allah knows best. (Tranlator)

> Prophet (pbuh) said: "This is the bounty of Allah that He bestows on whomever He wills."

So, if they were to receive a reward equal to that of the well to do, due to mere intention, he would have said to them: "Intend to do as they do, and you will get a reward equal to theirs." But when the Prophet told them to compensate what they missed due to lack of capacity, with the words procuring the same reward, it was then clear that this referred to the superiority of the rich. And when the rich shared them in the words, the superiority still remained, so that the poor complained again to the Prophet, saying that the rich said the same words, performed the same Prayer and observed the same fasting. Thereupon the Prophet told them that this is the bounty of Allah that He bestows on whomever He wills. Had there been some way to help them be equal with them through intention, he would have directed them to it indeed.

The poor said: "This *Hadith* is a proof on our behalf, if only it is understood according to its true message. This is because the meaning of the *Hadith* states: If they are equal

to you in belief, Islam, performance of prayers and observance of Fasting, but have priority over you by virtue of giving in charity, you may find in saying *Allahu akbar, Subhanal-lal* and La *ilaha illal iah*[1] that which makes you reach their degree. In addition, your intention makes you equal to them, for if you were to be well to do like them, you would have done as they do. In another tradition, the same *Hadith* reads: "If you adhere to it you will precede those who were before you, and those who will come after you will not be able to reach you." This indicates that the rich will not reach them even if they should say as they say. As for the Prophet's words, "This is the bounty of Allah that He bestows on whomever He wills", it means that the bounty of Allah is not confined only to you, rather than them, for as Allah bestows His bounty upon you, when you say such words, He also bestows it on them when they do the same. However, you understood that this bounty is especially for you and, consequently, gave it an incorrect interpretation. It is no doubt general and comprehensive, that it includes the rich, so you cannot take its privileges

(1) It means, "There is no god but Allah."

alone. Now, where is the priority placed for you over us in this, *Hadith?"*

The Prophet words: "this is the bounty of Allah" give three probabilities: First: the priority of the rich by virtue of giving in charity; second: the equality between the rich and the poor by virtue of saying the words (pinpointed above); and third: the merits of the poor represented in their entering Paradise half a day[1] before the time the rich enter it. Although this is not mentioned in this narration, it is cited in some others.

Musa Ibn `Ubaydah narrated that Ibn `Umar reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said:[2]

> "this is the bounty of Allah that He bestows on whomever He wills. O poor people! Shall I then not give you glad tidings that the poor Muslims poor are going to enter Paradise before the rich (Muslims) by half a day, and it

---

(1) It equals five hundred years.

(2) The Prophet said these words to the poor after they had complained that the rich said the same words and came again to have priority over them. It is another narration of the Hadith mentioned before it.

equals five hundred years."[1]

Then Musa Ibn `UJbaydah recited the verse reading:

﴿ Verily a Day in the sight of the Lord is like a thousand years of your reckoning. ﴾

(Al-Haj: 47)

This is one and the same report bearing glad tidings to those who complained that the rich excelled them by saying the words mentioned above. It seems moreover that this is the merit bearing priority, as they are going to precede them in entering Paradise by virtue of their special position, though they are equal to the others in the saying of the words and in giving of charity, with good intention, in addition to their enjoyment of the privilege of being poor.

The rich said: "You have exaggerated in interpreting the *Hadith* to match your requirements, although it is quite explicit in giving preference to the fair party. When the Prophet said: "this is the bounty of Allah that He bestows on whomever He wills", he said it in answer to the poor after they had said: "The well-to-do have become equal to

---

(1) Musnad Al-Bazar.

us in mentioning of the same words, just as they are equal to us in performing Prayers and observing Fasting, and in belief too. Yet still, they have the merit of giving in charity and nothing has changed with them that we may reach them in this merit, though they have reached us in saying the words you have taught us." These words that the Prophet said in reply were very explicit in expressing their goal. To clarify, when the poor failed to achieve priority by giving in charity because they had nothing to give, the Prophet told them that they had the priority of preceding the rich in entering Paradise by half a day, and that precedence was in compensation for the virtue of richness and giving in charity of which they were deprived. However, this does not necessarily mean that the poor excel the rich in rank and degree, for who is better and higher in degree than most of the seventy thousand persons who are going to enter Paradise without account?

Allah (Glory be to Him) names property "goods" in more than one place in the Qur`an. For example, we read:

> ﴿ It is prescribed, when death approaches any of you if he leave any goods, that he make a bequest. ﴾ (Al-Baqarah: 180)

And the Prophet (pbuh) told that good brings only good, as we mentioned before; yet evil may be brought through showing disobedience to Allah in what is good. Interestingly enough, Allah has made property a source to be used for raising and building lives, which Allah has prescribed, that they must be protected. Also, the Prophet (pbuh) praised it saying:

> "The best property is that which the good man possesses."[1]

Moreover, Sa`id Ibn Al-Musayyab said: "there is no good in whosoever does not want to lawfully collect property to protect his honor from the humility of begging, using it to link with his relatives, and to pay Allah's right in it." And Abu Ishaq Al-Subay`i said: "The people of knowledge held that capacity in property helps man in his religion." Also, Muhammad Ibn Al-Munkader said: "Property is the best support for the person who is conscious of Allah." And Sufiyan Ath-Thawri said: "In this time, property has become the weapon of the believer." In extension, Yusof Ibn Subat said: "Property is more

[1] Al-Bukhari (299), Ahmad (4/197), and others.

beneficial in our time than it has ever been since the creation of the world."

Allah (Glory be to Him) has made property a means of the protection of the body, which is consequently a protection for the soul that is the place where we know Allah, believe in Him, love Him, show repentance to Him, and believe in His Messengers. It is the pillar of population of the world and of the Hereafter. What is detestable concerning it, is that it may be obtained unlawfully and spent improperly, and that it may enslave man, possess his heart and distract him from Allah and from the Hereafter. In short, it is detestable as long as it leads man to evil objectives and distracts him from good ones. But it must be realized that reprimand is directed to the user, not the property used. The Prophet (pbuh) said:

> "May the slave of *Dinar* be wretched. May the slave of *Dirham* be wretched."

As it is clearly stated, the Prophet reprimanded the slaves of property, not the property itself.

Imam Ahmad narrated that Yazid Ibn Maysarah said: In the past, there was a man who used to collect and treasure

wealth. While he was sitting with his family, he contemplated his position and said "What a prosperous time!" Then the Angel of death came in the shape of a needy passer-by and asked the household to call their lord and tell him that it was the Angel of death. When the man heard it, horror surmounted him, but the Angel ordered him to make his bequest. The man ordered his household to open the boxes of money. When he saw the money before him, he started to curse it repeating that it had distracted him from his Lord and from the Hereafter until he had reached his end. Thereupon the money spoke out saying, "Do not curse me. Were you not humble and I upgraded you? Was my mark not seen upon you? Was it not that kings and masters let you meet them, while they rejected to meet the righteous servants of Allah? Was it not that you were enabled to get married to the daughters of kings and masters, while the righteous servants of Allah were always rejected? Did you not spend me in the cause of Devil, and I was at your disposal? If you spent me in the cause of Allah, I would be at your disposal too. It is you who is to blame. Both I and the children of Adam have been created out of clay, but some of us follow the way of

righteousness and some others follow the way of sins'. This is what money said, so be careful.

From amongst 'the benefits of property is that it helps man to worship Allah and obey Him properly. It is an essential part in Pilgrimage, Jihad, giving in charity, freeing slaves, endowment, and building mosques, bridges and the like. It is property that helps man to get married, and it is the basis of all virtues and manliness. It is property that the qualities of generosity and beneficence are created through. It is a great means of protection of honor.

It helps man to acquire fellows and friends. It contributes to leading the righteous to high ranks in the Hereafter and accompanying those to whom Allah has shown favor. Suffice it to seize attentions here to the fact that as property may lead man to the highest place in Paradise, it may also reduce him to the lowest of the low in the Fire. We may in passing quote a saying delivered by one of the Early Muslims; he said: "There is no glory without action, and there is no action without property." Another one said: "O Allah! I am one of your servants, who cannot be righteous but by richness.

Jihad is the highest of actions. It is sometimes handled through one's soul, and some others through property. Perhaps the handling of Jihad through property is more influential and beneficial. This is why `Uthman Jbn `Affan (may Allah be pleased with him) had priority over `Ali Ibn Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) by his giving of his property in the cause of Allah, although the latter excelled him in talking Jihad with his own soul, and preceded him to Islam. Also we have as an example Az-Zubayr and `Abdur-Rahman Ibn `Auf (may Allah be pleased with them both), who were more useful and helpful with their wealth than many Companions of the Prophet (pbuh).

The Prophet (pbuh) forbade that property should be destroyed and told that is better for man to leave his heirs rich rather than leave them poor. The prophet also told that whenever the owner of property spends part of it for the sake of Allah, it raises him up in degree and rank.

He also sought Allah's refuge against poverty, and connected it with disbelief in his invocation:

O Allah! I seek Your refuge against disbelief and

poverty."[1]

This is because good is of two types: the good of the Hereafter, which is contradicted by disbelief; and the good of the world, which is contradicted by poverty.

Allah (Glory be to Him) has made alms-giving the job of the rich and receiving this wealth the job of the poor, and has given priority to the giver over the taker. Allah, moreover, has made alms the dirty part of property; for this reason He prohibited them for the Prophet and his family as a sign of protection, honoring and upgrading.

No one can deny that the Prophet (pbuh) was poor, then Allah made him independent and sustained his needs, so that he used to reserve food for one year for his family, and used to give in charity with unique generosity. Allah gave him special property to protect him against poverty that leads to alms-taking; Allah says in the Qur`an:

> ﴿ What Allah has bestowed on His Messenger (and taken away) from the people of the townships, belongs to Allah, and to His Messenger. ﴾ (Al-Hashr: 7)

---

(1) Al-Buhkari (1295), and Muslim (1628).

Thus He compensated him with the best, most honorable and lawful property; it is what he obtained by his lance and sword from the enemies of Allah. Yet the richness of the Prophet (pbuh) is not like that of the people of the world; his richness is independence but theirs depends on the property possessed Besides, the Prophet (pbuh) managed his property as a servant in charge of his Master's property; he said:

> "By Allah; I neither give nor deprive any one. I am only a divider, and I do as I am commanded."[1]

The Prophet (pbuh) was the Most Patient of people when he was poor, and he was the most grateful to his Lord when he was independent. Allah made him a model both for the rich and for the poor. He was so independent, that he refused the keys of the treasures of the earth, as well as all other worldly temptations. When he received huge property, brought to him from the Arabian Peninsula and Yemen, he spent it all. He took charge of the orphans and took on liability of the debts of those who were not

---

[1] Al-Bukhari (3114, 3116), and Ahmad (2/482).

able to pay them back. He gave so much in charity, that he left nothing behind him.

If the grateful rich people want to take the example of the Prophet as proof, they cannot do it unless they do as he did. By the same token, if the patient poor people want to take the example of the Prophet as a poor person, they must first hold patience as firmly as the Prophet did. This is because the Prophet (pbuh) fulfilled his duties perfectly, whether poor or rich.

Commenting on the verse reading:

﴾ And soon will thy Guardian Lord give thee (that wherewith) thou shalt be well-pleased. ﴿

(Ad-Duha: 5),

`Abdullah Ibn `Amr Ibnul-`As said: "The world was no way to please the Prophet. He himself was not pleased with it. On the contrary, he refused it on the whole and he warned his nation against it. What really pleased him, was Allah's rewards, the conquests applied to Persia and Byzantine, people's conversion to Islam and such-like."

The rich went on to say to the poor that asceticism

does not contradict~ richness. Yet, asceticism held by the rich 'is more perfect than that held by the poor, since the rich man holds asceticism with capacity, but the poor man holds it out of necessity. No doubt, the distance between the two parties in this concern is quite clear. To illustrate, when the Prophet (pbuh) was independent, he was the most ascetic, even though he had a lot of money. Abraham, the Close Friend of Allah, was also most disinterested in the world.

Someone asked Imam Ahmad, "Can the man who has a thousand Dinars be regarded as an ascetic?" He said, "yes, but on condition that he does not feel joyful when it increases, nor does he feel sorry when it decreases." And one of the Early Muslims said, "The true ascetic is the one whose gratitude is not excelled by the lawful, nor is his patience excelled by the prohibited."

This is one of the best requisites that which comprises both gratitude and patience. The one who does not keep to both of them is not a true ascetic. The true ascetic is the one who shows gratitude constantly, no matter how big his riches are, and holds patience firmly, no matter how many

temptations he faces. Asceticism is of three types: First: disinterest in the prohibited; second: disinterest in the permissible; and third: disinterest in doubtful and reprehensible matters. The first type is obligatory, the second one is voluntary, and the third one resides between the first two types, as it differs according to the degree of doubt.

As long as asceticism is held for the sake of Allah and of the Hereafter, it makes those who hold it do their best to receive their Lord's pleasure. They utilize their time only in carrying out His commands. As a result, they become, the most joyful, peaceful and tranquil among people. Seeking the worldly life brings only grief, sorrow and sadness. It is such a torment, which leads to a more strenuous torment to come.

Such grief, sorrow, and sadness come from two dimensions. The first one is interesting in the world, and the second dimension is neglecting works of righteousness. All these aspects cultivate different diseases of the heart, such as envy, pride, boastfulness and conceit. No doubt, having any of these diseases contradicts gratitude. This is

why ridding oneself of them is counted as the first pillar of showing gratitude.

Large property and a long lifetime resemble each other, in that each of them either upgrades man or degrades him. The prophet (pbuh) referred in some *Hadith* that the best of people are the ones to whom are given a long lifetime and goodness of work"[1]. To clarify, the way of poverty is a way of peace as long as patience is maintained. But the way of wealth is almost a way of breakdown unless the rich man manages his property in the way Allah ordains. When property is handled in the correct way, it may bring benefit without measure.

But which one has priority over the other: the one who chooses to be rich and spends his property in the cause of Allah, or the one who chooses to be poor to take himself away from the temptation of property and prepare himself for the Hereafter, or the one who neither chooses this nor that, but submits to what Allah chooses for him? The Early

(1) `Abd Ibn Hamid in Al-Muntakhab (2/140) and Al-Asbahani in At-Targhib (144) on the authority of Jabir Ibn `Abdillah.

Muslims differed in their choices. Some of them chose to be of the first kind, such as `Abdu-Rahman Ibn `Awf (may Allah be pleased with him). Some others chose to be of the second kind, such as Abu Dhar Al-Ghifari (may Allah be pleased with him). And a third group preferred to receive what Allah chose for them.

Similarly, a group of Early Muslims wished to live long for the sake of Islamic *Da`wah* and worship of Allah on the whole. Some of them loved death so as to meet Allah and relieve themselves from the hardships of the world. Moreover, a third group thought only of what their fate had for them, whether a long or a short lifetime. Abu Bakr As-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) was one of the third section. When be fell ill soon before his death, people asked him if he wanted a doctor. He said that a doctor had already seen him. When they asked him about what the doctor said, he said, "He said: "I do what I will.""[1]

As for the Prophet (pbuh), because he knew his Lord best, he used to choose what he knew was preferred by

---

(1) Abu Bakr used the term "doctor' for Allah (Glory be to Him). (Translator)

Allah. For example, when the Angel of death came to him and let him choose between life and death, he chose death, for he felt that His Lord loved to meet him. If he knew that Allah loved him to stay to continue executing His commands, he would surely have chosen what His Lord wanted. May the blessings and peace of Allah be upon him!

The Prophet is the best model for all people[1]

All the good qualities that Allah bestowed upon His Prophet (pbuh) were of ultimate excellence, that he is the best model for all people. So if a sect of his nation wants to take him as a proof because he enjoyed the same quality they enjoy, it is possible for another sect enjoying another quality to take him as a proof too. To illustrate, if those who fight in the cause of Allah take the prophet as a proof to ascertain that they are the best sect, scholars can also take him as a proof to say it is they who are the best sect.

If the ones who hold asceticism and disinterest in the world take him as a proof of their priority, the ones who indulge in worldly affairs, government, and policy in order to establish the religion of Allah and implement His

(1) Translator adds this title.

commands, can also take him as a proof of their priority.

If the patient poor people take him as a proof, so can the grateful rich people.

If the ones who adhere to sobriety and gravity take him as a proof of their priority, the ones who lean to permissible joking and enjoy a sense of humor can also take him as a proof.

If the ones who prefer to proclaim the truth in public take him as a proof, the ones who tend to generosity and shyness, and prefer not to directly tell a man about what enrages him if said in public, can take him as a proof too.

If the ones who utilize their time in working for the sake of the religion take the prophet as a proof, the ones who work for the probity of the world can take him as a proof too, for the Prophet was sent for the probity both of the religion and of the world.

If the ones who choose to forgive and forbear take him as a proof, the ones who choose to avenge when necessary can do the same too.

If the ones who spend for the sake of Allah, and take

certain people for friends also for the sake of Allah, take the Prophet as a proof, the ones who do not give certain people out of their property, and take others for enemies, all for the sake of Allah can seek support in his example too.

If the ones who observe voluntary fasting constantly take him as a proof, the ones who do not do this can justify their inaction by the Prophet's example. This is because he used to observe fasting so constantly, that people thought he never broke fast, and he used to stop observing fasting for such a long time, that they thought he never observed fasting.

If the ones who are lenient with their wives take him as a proof, those who desert and hurt them to deem their morals proper can vindicate through the Prophet's example too.

If the ones who base their judgments on mere manifest aspects take the Prophet as a proof, the ones who insist to judge after having pursued evidence and proofs can take him as a proof too. In passing this we may remember, for example, that `Umar Ibn ul-Khattab (may Allah be pleased

with him) punished a woman for committing adultery depending on pregnancy, and applied the punishment of wine-drinking to a man depending on the smell of wine. We may also remember that Allah (Glory be to Him) tells in the Qur`an in the story of His Prophet Joseph that the latter's witness judged that he was innocent depending on the manifest evidence of his shirt that was torn from behind. Anyhow, the *Shari 'ah* of the Prophet is full of such examples.

Finally, we say that this chapter is mainly intended to highlight the fact that the patient poor people are not closer to the Prophet (pbuh) than the grateful rich people. After all, the closest of people to him are the most knowing of his *Sunnah* and the most adherent to it. May Allah show us the clear straight path!

CHAPTER TWENTY FIVE
What May Contradict Patience

Patience primarily means not to complain to anyone other than Allah, not to let the heart feel angry with one's fate, and not to let the organs express wrath, sorrow, grief and the like in a forbidden way. Relying on this principle, whenever man lets himself do such prohibited actions, it means that he is not one of the patient.

One of the matters which contradict patience is to complain about Allah to a human being. When a servant does this he only complains about the One Who pities him, to the one who does not pity him. As for raising complaints to Allah Himself, it does not conflict with patience, as we have mentioned in the story of Ya`qub, when he said,

﴾ (For me) patience is most fitting ﴿

(Yusuf: 18)

But suffice it to say that when the servant tells his Muslim brother about his bad circumstances only to get his advice, it does not then violate patience. We may cite the example of the patient who tells his doctor about his pains,

and the example of the wronged person who complains to the ruler. Yet, some pious people dislike expressing even their pains caused by illness through moans and sighs. Mujahid said: "Everything that which man does is written down in his book even his moaning out of illness; the people of knowledge said that moaning may be an expression of complaining which contradicts patience." Imam Ahamd also held this opinion concerning moaning. But there is another report stating that he said that it does not violate patience. Al-Marwazi reported that when he went to visit Imam Ahmad when he was ill, the Imam told him about the pains he was suffering from and his eyes shed tears. Once again, moaning for the sake of complaining is reprehensible, but if done for the sake of relieving, is irreprehens ible, particularly when the moaner expresses his praising of Allah before moaning or talking about his pains.

Complaint is of two types: one that is expressed with words and one expressed with acts. The second type may be the more dangerous of the two types. For this reason, the Prophet (pbuh) ordered that the ones who are provided with bounties should reveal their marks for people.

However, there is another type of complaint which is more dangerous than those two; it is that one complains about his Lord while he is covered with His bounties. Such a man is most detestable in the eyes of Allah. Imam Ahmad narrated that Ka`bul-Ahbar said: "One of the best deeds is to glorify and praise Allah, and one of the worst deeds is to claim that you are wretched, while you are covered with Al-lah's favors."

Another matter contradicting patience is to express bereavement with forbidden expression, such as tearing of clothes, slapping of the face and cutting the hair. The Prophet (pbuh) condemned such acts. But weeping and grieving are not involved in these matters. Allah tells about Ya`qub's grief saying,

> ﴿ And his eyes became white with sorrow, and
> he was suppressed with silent sorrow.﴾

(Yusuf: 84)

Qatadah said: "It means that he was sad and sorry but said nothing save good words."

Ibn `Abbas reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said:

> "Every thing that the eye or the heart may produce is from Allah and out of mercy, but every thing that the hand or the tongue may produce is from the Devil."

Khalid Ibn Abu `Uthman reported that when Sa`id Ibn Jubayr saw him covering his head after one of his Sons had died he said to him: "Ward off this cover, for it is a token of submission (to bereavement)". And Bakr Ibn `Abdullah Al-Mazini reported that some people of knowledge said that confining oneself at home after having faced bereavment is a token of submission to it.

`Ubayd Ibn `Umayr siad: "It is not a token of a despised expression that one should weep or grieve, however, bad words and thoughts are what are to be despised."

`Abdullah Ibnul-Mubarak reported that a man saw Yazid Ibn Yazid performing Prayers, while his son was dying. The man asked him: "Are you performing Prayers, while your son is dying?" Yazid said: "To desert (under such circumstances) a work that you are used to handling for even one day is a shortcoming in this work."

Another matter contradicting patience is to speak out of bereavment. Yet the best token of patience in this regard is to hide it. Al-Hasan Ibnus-Sabah narrated in his *Musnad* that Ibn `Umar reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said:

"It is a symbol of righteousness that one should hide bereavment, disease and alms (giving)"

When one of `Ata's eyes became blind, no one of his family knew it for twenty years, and then they knew it by mere accident. And when someone entered to Dawud At-Ta`i, he saw him trembling because of illness and said, "To Allah we belong, and to Him is our return" but Dawud begged him not to tell anyone about his illness. There had passed four months of his illness before that situation took place. Moreover and more impressive still, the uncle of Al-Ahnaf remained for forty years with a blind eye, but no one was aware of it.

Another matter contradicting patience is impatience. It is that man falls into fretfulness at the time of bereavment, and then restores his normal condition after it has gone. Allah the Almighty says:

﴿ Truly man was created, very impatient;

fretful when evil touches him; and niggardly when good reaches him. ﴿

(Al-Ma`arij: 18-21)

There are some facts which may clarify the meaning of the impatient man. When such a man feels hungry he expresses his hunger simultaneously; when something hurts him he complains as soon as possible; when he is suppressed he quickly submits to it; and when he meets something profitable he flies to catch it. In short, he does not forbear pains, nor does he neglect opportunistic pursuit of gains. May Allah help us all be righteous!

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

Patience and Gratitude as derived from Allah's Attributes

It was the Prophet (pbuh) who said that Allah (Glory be to Him) is the Most Patient, as he was the best to know his Lord's attributes. Abu Musa reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said:

> "There is no one who shows patience when hearing something insulting, better than Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He). They say that He begets, but He gives them health and provision."[1]

The "Most Patient" is one of the Fairest Names of Allah. The patience of Allah is surely different from His creatures'. His patience no doubt excels theirs in many aspects. To illustrate, Allah's patience goes out of ultimate might, as Allah the Almighty never feels worried or anxious about anything. Moreover, His patience never means that pain, grief or any other aspect of imperfection

---

(1) Al-Bukhari (73-78), and Muslim (2804).

may approach Him when showing patience. Actually, the signs of this name are certainly witnessed all over the world, just as the signs of His name, the Most Forbearing.

The difference between patience and forbearance is that patience is a fruit and a requisite of patience; the servant is as much forbearing as he is patient. So "The Most Forbearing" in the attributes of Allah is wider than "The Most Patient". This is why the name, the Most Forbearing is mentioned in the Qur`an in more than one place. And because of its wide meaning and influence, Allah cites it with His name, the All-Knowing. For example, we read:

﴾ And Allah is All-Knowing, Most Forbearing ﴿

(Al-Ahzab: 51)

According to some traditions, the Angels who uphold the Throne are four; two of them (keep) saying, "O Allah! Glory be to You and Your praises are glorified. Praise be to You for Your forbearance after Your knowledge." And the other two Angels say, "Glory be to You and Your praises are glorified. Praise be to You for Your forgiveness

after Your might."[1] Man shows forbearance out of ignorance and forgives out of disability, but Allah, the Almighty shows forbearance out of absolute knowledge and forgives out of perfect might. So it is always most proper to confine forbearance to knowledge and forgiveness to might.

As for Allah's patience, it is confined to disbelief, polytheism, insult, and different aspects of disobedience held by His creatures. None of these aspects make Him accelerate the punishment for His servant; yet He gives him time to show repentance and rethink; He keeps encouraging him to come back to His path. But when He knows that the servant will not change his mind, despite Allah's encouragement through bounties, tests, incentives and warnings, then He grasps him with the grasp of the Mighty.

Since the name, the Most Patient, is not mentioned in the Qur`an as attributed to Allah, scholars did not speak of it in detail, and were preoccupied by dealing with the patience held by man. Had they given this name the interest

(1) At-Tabary in his Tafsir (7/19) and others.

it deserves, they would have realized that Allah the Almighty is the Most Worthy of it, just as He is the Most Worthy of the names: the Most Knowing, the Most Merciful, the Most Hearing, the Most Seeing, and the other Fairest Names. They would also have realized how far the distance is between His patience and that of people, as there is nothing like Allah (Glorified and Exalted by He).

Realizing this fact, the Prophet (pbuh) said:

> "There is no one who is more patient when hearing something insulting, than Allah."

Hearing this statement, people of intelligence knew about His patience, just as they knew about His mercy and forgiveness. It is the patience shown by the Greatest of the great, the King of kings and the Best of the generous to the ones who insult His perfection, names and attributes, set matches beside Him, deny and hurt His Messengers (may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon all of them), and insult, hurt and burn His close friends. Only the Most Patient is capable of showing patience to such persons.

If you want to have more knowledge of the patience and forbearance of Allah, and the difference between both

of them, contemplate the Qur`anic verses as follows.

Allah says:

﴿ It is Allah who sustains the heavens and the earth, lest they cease (to function): and if they should fail, there is none-not one can sustain them thereafter: verily, He is Most Forbearing, Oft-Forgiving. ﴾

(Fatir: 41)

﴿ They say: "The most Gracious has betaken a son!" Indeed ye have put forth a thing most monstrous! At it the skies are about to burst, the earth to split asunder, and the mountains to fall down in utter ruin, that they attributed a son to the Most Gracious. ﴾

(Mariam: 88-91)

Thus, Allah (glory be to Him) tells that His forbearance and forgiveness prevent Him from letting the heavens and the earth cease to function. His forbearance along with sustaining them represent patience. So out of His forbearance, He shows patience to His enemies. The first

verse indicates that the heavens, and the earth seem as if they are about to deviate because of people's sins, but Allah grasps them out of forbearance and forgiveness. Thus, He confines His punishment away from the ones who disobey Him; this is the true nature of His patience. In this context, Imam Ahmad reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said:

> "Every day the sea asks its Lord to let it drown the children of Adam."[1]

This is a natural act of the sea, for water is stronger and higher than the land, but Allah grasps it out of His might, forbearance and patience. Similarly, Allah the Almighty prevents the collapse of mountains and the tearing of the heavens. Although the deeds of disbelievers and polytheists deserve instant punishment, Allah meets them with requisites of His greatness, might and glory, namely patience and forbearance.

Allah's mercy takes place before His anger. Consequently the signs of mercy take place before that of anger.

---

[1] Musnad Ahmad (1/43) on the authority of Umar Ibnul-Khattab.

This is why the Prophet (pbuh) sought refuge in the attribute of pleasure from that of wrath, and in the act of forgiveness from that of punishment, then he connected both of the two matters in the Entity of Allah, for it is that which originates and acts on them. The Prophet is reported to have said:

> "(O Allah!) I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your wrath, I seek refuge in You from Yourself."[1]

Interestingly enough, things from which people seek refuge in Allah are mainly originated out of His will, and thus it is He Who grasps or releases their power of influence.

Contemplate the pure trust and absolute monotheism involved in the Prophet's invocation; "I seek refuge in You from Yourself". It refers to the fact that Allah is the only One to fear and yearn for, and to seek help both in bringing good and warding off harm. He may be angry with the disobedient, but the obedience shown by His Angels and

---

(1) At-Termidhi (3506), and he said it is a sound but strange Hadith. Abu Dawud (1427), and An-Nasa'i (3/249).

believing servants pleases Him. So He gives refuge in His pleasure from His anger.

In Surat al-An`am, after Allah speaks of His enemies and their disbelief, polytheism and denial of His Messengers, He mentions the story of His Close 'Friend, Abraham (pbuh); how He showed him the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and how he disputed with his people for the sake of monotheism. Then Allah mentions the Prophets who sprang from Abraham's progeny, and how He guided them, and gave them the Book, Judgment and Prophet hood. Then Allah says,

> ﴾ If these (their descendants) reject them, behold! We shall entrust their charge to a new people who reject them not.﴿

(Al-An`am: 89)

Thus, He (Glory be to Him) tells that as He makes in the earth people who disbelieve in Him, deny monotheism and Messengers, He also makes in it truthful servants who believe in what the others disbelieve in, trust whom they deny, and maintain the sanctities that they violate.

In this way, there comes a balance between the upper world and the lower one, otherwise only disorder and chaos would be the result. This is why the termination of the functions, .which sustain the continuation of the world as ordained by Allah, come from amongst the causes of its collapse.

Forbearance of Allah is the origin of His patience, as the name "The Most Forbearing' belongs to His attributes, but the name "the Most Patient" belongs to His deeds. This may be why the name "the Most Forbearing" is mentioned in the Qur`an, while the name "the Most Patient" is not mentioned there, as the former includes the meanings of both names.

As for the name "the All-Thankful" as attributed to Allah, it is mentioned in some *Hadith* of the Prophet[1] and in the Qur`an under the name "The Recognizer (of all good)" as in the verse,

> ﴿ It is Allah That recognizeth (all good), and knoweth All things. ﴾ (An-Nisa`: 147)

---

(1) At-Tirmidhi (3507) on the auffiority of Abu Hurairah. At-Tirmidhi said it is a Gharib Hadith.

He is also called "the All-Thankful" in the Qur`an:

﴾ Allah is All-Thankful, Most Forbearing. ﴿

(At-Taghabun" 17)

Allah also refers to this in His Qur`anic statement:

﴾ Verily this is a Reward for you, and your Endeavor is accepted and recognized. ﴿

(Al-Insan: 22)

Thus, Allah gives them both things: acceptance and recognition of their endeavor, and rewards them for it.

Allah the Almighty thanks His servant when he obeys Him perfectly, and forgives him when He turns to him in mercy, combining for him both appreciation and forgiveness, for He is Ever Forgiving, All-Thankful.

It has already been mentioned in detail in chapter twenty, how the servant can show gratitude. However, the gratitude shown by Allah the Almighty is quite different, just as His patience is different from that of people.

He is most worthy of the attribute of gratitude, for He is the All-Thankful. He provides the servant with bounties

and teaches him how to show gratitude for them. He appreciates the good deed so generously, that He increases its reward ten times as much and there is no limit to how much He may further increase it. Allah also thanks the endeavor of His servant by mentioning it to the Angels and to the Exalted Assembly, and makes these servants of His thank the doer of good. After all, it is He Who gives, teaches the servants how to praise Him for the thing given, and then helps him handle it. Indeed, there is no comparison between the good deed and the reward given for it by the Most Generous.

It is a sign of His thankfulness that He rewards His enemies for the good they do in the World, by alleviating their torment in he Hereafter, although they are most detestable in His sight.

An example of His thankfulness is that He forgave the prostitute, who gave water to the dog that was about to die of thirst. He also forgave a disobedient man because he removed a branch of thorns from the path of Muslims.

Allah is Thankful to the servant because of the good he does for his own benefit. Yet, the servant is thankful to

those who do good to him. It is interesting to note that it is He (Glory be to Him) Who provides the servant with the means which enables him to do good, and then rewards him to such an extent that it is much greater in comparison with his humble act. So who is more worthy of the name "The All-Thankful" than Allah! Glory be to Him!

Contemplate the verse reading:

> ﴿ What can Allah gain by your punishment, if ye are grateful and ye believe? Nay, it is Allah that recogniseth (all good), and knoweth all things. ﴾ (An-Nisa`: 147)

You may observe that the context of the verse indicates how Allah, in his thankfulness refuses to inflict punishment on people who have committed no crime, as well as he refuses not to give fruit to their endeavors. This is the way of the All-Thankful. In this, we also find a reply to those who allege that Allah burdens them beyond their capacity, and then punishes them for their failure. Naturally, this is impossible, for it is the requisite of the attribute "the All Thankful" that the grateful will never be punished. In addition, Allah removes the servant from the Fire for a very

small amount of good, and never deprives him of any right.

Since Allah is truly All-Thankful, He loves the most, those who are thankful and grateful. He, conversely, detests the most those who disregard this attribute, and act in contradiction to its sense. This is applied to all the other Fairest Names of Allah. Allah loves the most those who do as these attributes are required, and who use their sense, and detests the most those who do the opposite. Thus, He (Glory be to Him) hates the ungrateful, the oppressors, the people of ignorance, the merciless, the miserly, cowards, and so on. Conversely, He (Glory be to Him) loves the beautiful, the beneficent, the grateful, the patient, the generous, the forgiving and so on. To summarize this point,

Allah loves every one and every action tracing the signs and the sense of His names and attributes, and detests every one and every action contradicting their nature and objectives.

Conclusion

O you who ardently desire to meet Allah and be successful in the Hereafter! Beware the alarm has been sounded, so be ready to leave. March forward desiring His favors and remembering your sins. The ones who are truly aware of the true nature of these favors and their sins find in themselves insufficient works that they fear that they cannot secure salvation for them. Hope can only be found in His mercy and forgiveness, for everyone is in dire need of both. O Allah! I acknowledge Your favors on me, and confess my sins; so forgive me, since I am a poor sinful servant, and You are the Ever-Merciful, the Ever-Forgiving!

What would be the value of all your good deeds in companson to the smallest favor for which you are ungrateful? So adhere to yearning, and repent, doing good at every opportunity in the best way. Be ever conscious that Allah, the Ever-Forgiving and the All-thankful has shown you the path of salvation, and opened up its gates for you. He has revealed for you its consequences that lead to eternal happiness, just as He has revealed the conclusion

of the path of unhappiness and of the Fire. He has presented both incentives (to do good) and warnings (against doing evil), which confirm we have no proof against Him. (0 poor servant!) It is He Who gives you things with which you do good for your own benefit, and then He shows thanks to you when you do this, although you have done it for yourself, not for Him (Glory be to Him)!

It is Allah Whose forgiveness is sought by the sinful offering their repentance, knowing that He never disappoints the ones who truly trust Him. It is Allah, Whose generosity, the beneficent ones hope for, and He never lets them down. It is He Who answers the invocations of His servants, ascending to Him through the seven heavens. It is He Whose forgiveness, forbearance and bounties have covered all the worlds. It is He, our Lord, the Ever-Forgiving, the All-Thankful.

There is no doubt that Allah is more merciful to a baby than its own mother. He accepts the seemingly insignificant good acts done to seek His pleasure. All happiness resides in obedience to Him, and the best profits are gained from

the transactions made with Him. Yet, all pains and sufferings are received as a result of showing disobedience to Him. Therefore, the most beneficial means to gain closeness with Him, is to show obedience and gratitude, and to continually offer repentance to Him.

The servant obeys Him by virtue of His guidance, but he disobeys Him out of his own ignorance and self-distress. At the same time, Allah thanks him for his obedience, and forgives his disobedience as soon as he seeks forgiveness and shows repentance. He always does this for His disobedient servant, as if he has never disobeyed Him. He rewards tenfold the like of a good deed, and He may give more whatever high. However, bad deeds are compensated with the like of it, and even then He may forgive them too.

Only the patient and the grateful, receive His favors, while the impatient and the ungrateful receive tonnent and humiliation. So take heed, 0 ungrateful and disobedient people! He may take you by surprise, for He is Ever-Watchful, just as He is Most Patient.

Keep performing good works, for He is All-Thankful. Keep asking for His forgiveness, for He is Ever-Forgiving.

Never give up hope of His mercy, for His mercy always comes before His anger.

Whoever endeavors to develop in himself any of His attributes, Allah takes him within His love and guidance. Whoever pursues His pleasure through His Fairest Names, He gives him success. Whoever loves Him, is always attracted to the love of His names and attributes, so that they become the nearest and the dearest to him.

The hearts find life in the knowledge and love of Allah. The organs reach perfection through showing obedience to Him. Even when the disobedient suffer from bereavements and tribulations, He expiates their sins and purifies them. It is He the Ever-Forgiving, the All-Thankful!

In conclusion, praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds, so that He may be pleased and satisfied. Praise be to Him, as the glory of His face and greatness of His power deserve. May prayers and peace of Allah be upon His Prophet Muhammad and his family and Companions, and upon all the Prophets and Messengers! And, may Allah be pleased with whosoever follows them with goodness until the Day of Resurrection! *Ameen!*